

Heart Breathing
or
Songs of Twenty Years.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES



To Mr Robert Linton

With Best Wishes for the New Year

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HEART BREATHINGS

OR

SONGS OF TWENTY YEARS

BY

ALEXANDER M'LAREN.

In many a clime, in many a stately tongue,
The mighty bards have sung;
To these the immemorial thrones belong
And purple robes of song;
Yet the slight minstrel loves the slender tone
His lips may call his own,
And finds the measure of the verse more sweet
Timed by his pulse's beat,
Than all the hymnings of the laurelled throng.

O. W. HOLMES

GLASGOW

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13 NELSON STREET, (CITY).



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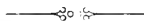
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P R E F A C E .



Like the "Chorus" in the old Dramas, it seems incumbent on Authors to say something to their readers, whether few or many—especially, when the little Argosies laden with their much prized, first-fruits are sent out on the waters; seldom to find a haven of Promise; oftener to drift beyond re-call—to a shore, where perpetual darkness broods; to which no Compass ever points, and no mariner willingly visits.

I need not repeat the story so often told, and as often unheeded—of the high hopes such an undertaking as this calls forth; nor weary you by enumerating the drawbacks of those who have no leisure to cultivate what gifts they may be endowed with; neither do I mean to apologise for the lack of even the rudiments of education, which is the average lot of those whom necessity compels to toil from earliest years, at the rougher occupations of life. While I could do so, I do not think it becomes authors to crave indulgence, as mendicants whine for charity, while exposing their infirmities to view.

The production of the pieces which fill this volume range over a period of more than twenty years; many pages might have been added, but for a first effort, this doubtless bulks large enough. They are not inserted in the order they were written, nor has any attempt at classification of subjects been made. The most of them are in print for the first time; In fact, beyond the circle of

a few friends, I am entirely unknown as a writer of verse, yet I come not before the public without some words of encouragement and of cheer from quarters, in which the influence of friendship is an unknown quantity.

There are Critics who carry sharp edged tools, and there are those of them who know how to use them. To the legitimate use of those weapons there can be no objections raised; and while I will try to benefit by any well pointed lesson, I will not be deterred from indulging my fancies in the future by adverse opinions.

Many typographical errors which escaped the proof-reading stage have since been discovered, and considering that this service was rendered by inexperience, and as a labour of love; also, that this is the first, and in all likelihood will be the last book undertaken by a very limited printing establishment; to such mistakes I trust you will "Be a little blind."

While I have aimed at being clear and concise, I may have failed sometimes to convey to the reader what I intended. It has been my experience in shaping ideas in words, that the original thought which sought embodiment, has almost wholly eluded my grasp, and in such circumstances I was obliged to rest content with having accomplished something quite different from what I contemplated at first.

I trust, with all its faults, its main purpose will be at least generally acknowledged as thirsting, however ineffectually after higher things. My Muse may be too

heavily encumbered to sustain itself in its projected flights : too much cramped, crippled, or fettered between walls of prejudice to reach Independence point ; to see the real nakedness of the world, ruminate on the evils which afflict it, and to suggest a cure. What I could picture is now before you, what the future has in store, you will by your reception of this, partly determine. In these outpourings of youth and of maturer years, I feel that very much of my own personality stands in relief before you, whether the motives that moved me stir also in you, remains yet to be seen.

Stunted perhaps, and meagre as this Sheaf is ; with all its unripe thought, and fervid utterances ; with all its blemishes, I send it forth to those of the public who care to have it—that which has long been a private possession is now a public one ; what was mine, has become yours ; if it contains anything worth prizing, you will preserve it ; if you deem it an indiscretion and a folly, you may lay it aside. In the words of a great living writer, I will only add—

‘Go little book, whose pages hold
Those garnered years in loving trust.’

ALEXANDER McLAREN.

157 St. Andrews Road,
Pollokshields, Glasgow, 1889.

HEART BREATHINGS.

A WANDERING POET.

One day, in the midst of my labours and cares,
A Seedy man entered my shop unawares ;
He saluted me freely, in jocular phrase,
As if he had known me from earliest days.

From his manner, I dubbed him a beggar and *bore*,
Though we never had met to my knowledge before ;
Yet, so jaunty he seemed, and so fluent of speech,
That I curbed my desire to get rid of the leech.

‘I’m a wandering poet,’ he said, with a sigh,
‘Yet, I have not a verse I can ask you to buy ;
I am low in the downs, I am beaten as flat
As a floundering fish, or a sodden door mat.’

‘Times are hard with you now, yes, I know that quite well !
So, I plead not for money, but—something to sell—
Some old journals past date, from your waste paper store ;
I will pay you when fortune shall smile on me more.’

'I'm the author of hundreds of poems well known,
 And many prime songs I can claim as my own ;
 Excluding one living illustrious name,
 I am second to none of the poets of fame.'

Though conversant with books, and with authorship too,
 Yet, the name sounded strange, and the claim was so new
 That I stared at the man with a pitying smile ,
 Quite assured that his wits had been wand'ring awhile.

Yes, I wondered, for doubtless, some talent was there—
 Had his mind been unhinged in some sink of despair ?
 Now a slave chanting sadly the songs of the free—
 A rank weed left to drift on the fathomless sea.

What a draught for sin's terrible angels to brew !
 What an ocean of bitters for man to float through !
 What a future to face, on the storm-driven wave,
 Till life's horrors are hid in the gloom of the grave.

When he left me, a weight seemed to fall from my care ;
 As my burdens felt lighter, I breathed forth a prayer—
 'Lord, save me from treading his dangerous path—
 From drinking so deep of the vials of wrath !'

“ALL THAT IS LEFT OF THEE.”



All that is left of thee, Brother, we lay
 In the cold grave.
 All that the cruel divider could slay ;
 All we would save—
 All we could cherish ;
 We have consigned to the brown earth to perish.

All that was mortal, brave brother is low ;
 Hid from our sight.
 Now the immortal is cleaving the bow,
 Towards The Light—
 Towards the faces,
 Filled with the loveliest, holiest graces.

Tireless and bold as a bird on the wing,
 Scornful of fears ;
 Long, long thy voice, absent brother, shall ring
 Clear on our ears—
 Thy work and thy deeds,
 Shine for us brighter than precepts or Creeds.

Heavy hearts mourn for thee, Brother, we know;
 Great is their loss:
 Bear with them, Father, O lighten the blow!
 Lighten their cross!
 O soothe them through time!
 Now, with their life-long hope blanced in his prime.

 Shall we speak loudly? shall salvos of praise,
 Flatter thee now?
 Would all the din brazen trumpets may raise,
 Flush thy pale brow?
 No! "Sweets to the sweet,"
 God shall adorn with the wreath that is meet.



IMPROMPTU.

We cannot always meet with clasp of hand,
 Distance forbids, and other ties demand
 Our presence near them;
 But now, how sweet a joy to life it lends,
 With such fair flowers to greet our absent friends,
 In hope to cheer them.

THE I T H E R L A N '.

A Lilt to the Bairns.

O ask me nae mair the noo bairns !

Whaur oor wee darlin's gane;

For I canna tell ye true, bairns,

An' guessin' gi'es me pain !

They say there's ither lan's abune

That roof o' cloudy sky,

Wi' clearer licht than Sun or Mune,

An' a' the stars forbye.

An' some say, in that ither lan',

Are braid, braid streets o' gold,

An' mansions built wi' pearl sae gran',

Oor ransomed kin to hold.

To sail on glitterin' crystal seas—

To bathe in amber streams ;

The votaries o' wealth may please,

As answerin' a' their dreams.

To sit wi' saints in coontless thrangs—
 To sing aye a'e refrain;
 Wad mak' some yearn to hear the sangs
 They heard on earth again.

That wadna be to us a hame,
 As heaven maun be to a';
 A tower o' strength we seek an' claim,
 That winna fade awa'.

That change nae doubt is unco great,
 To life without a sorrow;
 A'e day, in rags or regal state—
 In ether robes the morrow.

What we may hear, what we may see
 When we gang far'er ben,
 Is wisely hid frae you or me;
 We guess, but canna ken.

Yet, judging by the gifts we ha'e
 Close bounded by the human;
 We would be in that after day,
 Mair perfect man or woman.

We feel our weaknesses a' roun',
 Our best resolves aye failin':
 Syne, freed o' that which hauds us doon,
 Far hichts we'll a' be scalin'.

E'en then I canna see an end,
 Aye far'er maun we travel ;
 Transfigur't mair as we ascend,
 An' lea behin' the evil.

The boun'lessness o' God's domain
 Lies a' spread oot before us ;
 Up hill, ower plain, again ! again,
 Like aft repeated chorus.

Eternity's sae deep a sea,
 We ne'er can hope to sound it ;
 Sae, helpless, Lord, we cry to Thee !
 To shed mair glory round it !

Our wants Thou hast provided here,
 Mair than our richtfu' claim ;
 An' if its ill-divided cheer,
 Wi' us lies a' the blame !

As in the past, in future Lord !
 Where'er we bide or move,
 Supply shall wi' our wants accord,
 An' dootin' hearts reprove !

Sae, wait we till some brighter dawn
 Reveals that ither shore ;
 Wi' burns, an' flowers, an' grassy lawn,
 Mair hame-like loved the more.

We'll ask for nae extror'nar prize,
 Or favours ower the rest ;
 Believin' God is just an' wise,
 An' kens to portion best.

However weel we try to serve,
 Our best fa's far behin' ;
 An' were we dealt as we deserve,
 Few, few wad e'er get in.



H Y M N O F T R I U M P H .



While pacing daily round life's rampart wall,
 In various tones we hear Thy trumpet call ;
 We hear Thy guards pass on the countersign—
 'Our Lord shall triumph all along the line !'

The strongholds of Self-love are mighty ! yet,
 Let not Thy legions weary, Lord ! nor fret,
 Lead Thou the charge ! let not our zeal decline,
 Till shouts of triumph burst along the line !

Thine arm is strong ! our armour shall not fail ;
 Thy strong shields cover hearts that never quail :
 Though mightier hosts opposed Thy work divine,
 It yet shall triumph all along the line.

March on! though suffering from the fight of years,
 Though far beyond, the crowning goal appears ;
 If comrades fall, new forces shall combine
 And work for vict'ry all along the line !

Be not despondent for our Father's cause !
 Faint not, though now denied the world's applause ;
 Its place and power—its riches—all resign,
 And God shall triumph all along the line !

This night shall wane, that glorious morn shall come,
 When conquering Truth shall strike the scoffer dumb ;
 Thy light, O Lord ! through endless day shall shine,
 When Love has triumphed all along the line !



“WAY FA’ AWAY.”

I know a wee man who is far away,
 “Fa’ fa’ away,”
 And, I know they teaze him to hear him say
 “Way fa’ away.”

And, I wonder whether he tries to pray,
 “Ties to p’ay”—
 While the wayward will is so far away—
 “Way fa’ away”.

“Fa’ away,” lisps the tongue of that baby boy
 Like sweet refrain—
 Singing out from a pure and simple joy,
 Age seeks in vain.

And, he writes long letters from day to day,
 With eyes aglow;
 Though, what he ever contrives to say,
 We never know.

All over the paper he speedily skips,
 Demure as a sage;
 Then moistens his pencil between his lips,
 For another page.

But the secrets he writes, like the mystic spells
 He sees in dreams;
 May flood his manhood in wave-like swells;
 Or piercing gleams.

So, the letters he writes from far away,
 With love to all,
 Are strange as those words on that distant day,
 On th' eastern wall.

True, there is no prophet, no sage-like seer,
 To read them here;
 E'en the author himself,—the little dear—
 Could'nt make them clear.

Still, he must say something, when far away;
 Some word of cheer—
 A missive to all who own his sway—
 His subjects dear.

And we must interpret as best we can,
 This wee boy's say—
 Help him to grow to the perfect man,
 To walk God's way.

"GONE TO SCHOOL."

(Twin Children.)

Gone to School ! with bright and beaming faces,
Glad, in the sunshine of an April day ;
Too young to know that in life's measured paces,
There's more of work than play.

Too young to trace a cause for sin or sorrow ;
Too young to see when guile is in the way—
That tears may dim their bloom, before the morrow
Brings back her golden ray.

Too young to feel the want of bookish learning ;
They fly along with light and prancing tread,
To get equipped in coming years, for earning
The needful daily bread.

Gone to school ! o'er cranky letters bending
Those wills that ruled us with despotic sway ;
Perchance too soon, to larger questions lending
The young minds widening play.

It seems like yesterday, their hands were twining
Among our hair, and probing ears and eyes ;
The memory's fresh, of baby fingers mining—
Evolving starry skies.

So short it seems, and soon the chubby fingers
 Which hitherto have played with lead and line,
 May cramp o'er themes on which the memory lingers,
 As puzzling to define.

With throbbing hearts we watched our nestlings leaving
 To learn from strangers how to read and spell ;
 First steps—though lowly—worthy of achieving,
 And therefore doing well.

Gone to school ! it may be to temptation—
 To sink in, or, to triumph over sin ;
 Which shall be potent ? vexing dissipation ?
 Or, "still small voice within" ?

Fond parent hearts may understand our pleasures ;
 Our watch for progress, with sincerest prayer :
 Or, grieve like us, if evil traps such treasures,
 And strips the saplings bare.

Gone to school together, sweet beginning !
 May life's late windings find them side by side ;
 May goodness follow knowledge in the winning,
 With Grace divine for guide.

May Life as well as Art show lines of beauty,
 And, Love prevail whatever comes between ;
 Thus, though the surface may get soiled on duty,
 The hearts shall still be clean.

IN COMMON GROUND.

Oh! bury no more in the Common ground ,
Where the winds blow freely o'er them ;
Wild waving grass on the mound above,
And a flowerless bank before them.

O'er those silent heaps there is no carved scroll,
With a thought from those that love them ;
Unsung, they rest 'neath the crust of earth,
Which dries and cracks above them.

The sinless babe, in its sombre box,
From a lair of drink and squalor ;
Fills up a chink in the gruesome pile,
By the side of a midnight brawler.

The orphan girl, and the homeless youth,
Who wandered hither and thither ;
Are mixed with the bloated fiends of vice—
Huddled, and crammed together.

The aged, borne from their dreary homes,
Through their lowly life respected ;
Are buried in separate trenches there,
With those whom the slums rejected.

Why should our kindred, the helpless poor,
 Have all their wants so derided?
 Be condemned to live in their fouldens,
 And in death be so divided?

Too poor to purchase a length of earth,
 And spurned if they chanced to crave it;
 Oh! the horror of being crushed in there,
 Must pain even God who gave it.

Yet, men make rich by the sale of graves!
 And our rulers share, or condone it;
 But, the fiat goes forth from a righteous Judge,
 That, the doers of wrong shall atone it!

There are boundless tracks by the sounding sea,
 There are miles on miles beside us,
 Which we dare not till, yea, dare not tread;
 That, in single file, could hide us.

Not built up in piles so broad and high;
 But with sweet brown earth between us:
 A place, which a friend with pride might view,
 With sweet flowers and trees to screen us.

How long shall such festering pits of death?
 Stand open shamefully, giving
 Off stench, in vapours that float on the air,
 To poison the lungs of the living?

Oh! bury no more in the Common ground!

A waste behind and before them—

Dress every mound like a fairy bower,
That the birds may warble o'er them.



S O N N E T.

On laying a Birthday Offering on a Child's Grave.

(TWO YEARS AFTER DEATH.)



Flowers, pretty pet! I brought these flowers for you!

Fresh from the bosom of fair mother-earth;

Tell me, how many kisses are they worth?

One for each rain-drop, like bright beads of dew—

One for each cup that holds the little drink—

One for each stalk that bears each tiny cup—

One for each parent stem their life runs up!

No answer yet, do tell me what you think?

Still motionless—must I the boon command?

Has father's darling no carresses now?

No kisses, sweet, for lip, or cheek, or brow,

And, must these fall quite thankless from my hand?

Not thankless, no! too much from you I crave!

I lay my offering on a silent grave.

THE COVETOUS MINISTER, *

A TRUE STORY.



“Thou shalt not covet”—so the Scriptures say—

“What is thy neighbour’s”; then details are stated,
His ox, his ass, in short—whatever may

Be reckoned his belongings, e’en his wife—if mated—
This sounds of the Commandments pure; but stay!

Had Ladies then no claim but to be rated
As goods or chattels which they kept in store?
And valued with the stock just named before.

Had woman no proprietary right,

As wife, as mother, or, as Hebrew maiden?
As prophetess, as victor from the fight,

Returning warrior-like with spoils o’erladen?
If not, it was a sad, a greivous slight;

A mean revenge for the *affair* of Eden—
When Moses lived, the said event was recent,
Which may account for treatment scarcely decent.

* A version of this Story, adapted for a prose Reading, appeared in the Peoples Friend, in the Spring of 1888. This was written Thirteen Years earlier, and—though not in print—was read publicly years ago. A. M.L.

But, one may go beyond the mark, even here;
 The pronoun *he*, or *his* may be inclusive;
 Though at first glance it seems so very queer,
 And might—quite justly too—be termed delusive,
 By men who prize their wives, yea, so revere
 Them, as to blame the slightest tone abusive—
 We love so much our mothers of the earth,
 We deem an *Ere-less* Eden little worth.

Man's covetous inclinings come of greed,
 And grasping dispositions are too common;
 Crushing aspiring thought and noble deed,
 Purging the God-like out of man or woman:
 Yet, one law broken, breaks not all the Creed,
 That would make God a little less than human—
 Still it is gospel, given in days of yore,
 And I am sure you've heard it preached before.

Kind hearts may doubt this, very few will dare
 To say they do so if their pastors hear them;
 Dread is the vengeance strict divines declare
 Against all doubters, causing such to fear them.
 Strong men have more than trembled, so, beware!
 'Twas frightful e'en in thought for fiends to tear them;
 If ease is sought keep close the doubting heart,
 Which bared to haughty man is sure to smart.

Against this truth the ranters may declaim,

Yet, I propound no antiquated notion ;
Though seeming different, men are much the same

As when the flaming faggots caused commotion ,
Heretic is not yet an empty name ;

Still, persecution follows blind devotion—
Only the instruments with times are changed,
And hearts that fain would cleave to God estranged.

Wherever I can trace the life of man,

The open soul has always been the loser ;
I state this fact regardless who may scan

These lines, pronouncing this or that a poser ;
But having roved too far since I began,

I must draw near my theme, and hug it closer—
Divergences will happen at a time,
So say at least the devotees of rhyme.

Some time ago there lived a man, whose name

Tradition does not tell, but his vocation
Was that which wins for its true servants, fame

More glorious far than man's poor approbation.
He called on men eternal life to claim,

Through the grand promise of the great Salvation—
Pointing the path the saintly feet have trod,
Who walked in daily converse with their God.

A minister, a working brother man ;
 Speak therefore gently of a single failing.
 Many have withered under priestly ban,
 When there was really little need for quailing ;
 We look for ministers to lead the van,
 To trace the charts for humbler craftsmen's sailing—
 Charts of example, always best and surest,
 Inspired by motives always of the purest.

This man was covetous of much he saw,
 Though never taking aught without permission ;
 Which if half granted, he ignored all law,
 And never feigned the virtue of omission ;
 If reason fought desire, it failed to draw
 From such a heart as his the least contrition—
 He looked to covet, and his pompous ways,
 Made rich and poor contribute to his craze.

In this short web of fate I shall not weave
 A catalogue of all this brother's folly ;
 Some of it you might pardon I believe ;
 Love for a steaming pudding, crowned with holly
 Few will deny, though some thereat may grieve,
 And darkly hint disease and melancholy—
 Our hero was not quite a man of that sort,
 He would not wittingly the image distort.

There are so many things that one might love,
 Which I have no desire herein to mention.
 Our life is varied, thoughts of realms above
 Cannot be always fixed on man's attention.
 We prate a deal about the harmless dove,
 But, e'en in dove's affairs will come dissension—
 What creature shall we find perfection in? not one;
 Science has proved some dark spots in the Sun.

The worthy pastor toils from dawn till late;
 Nor, is his mission to the church confined;
 At any time he goes beyond the gate,
 To soothe the sick, to reason with the blind;
 And then besides, his flock in healthier state
 Require his presence and enquiries kind—
 Thus in God's vineyard there's incessant toil,
 To plant, to prune, and then protect from spoil.

Our hero on his usual rounds, one day
 Called on a widow, rich with blessings small;
 Who had at least what kept the wolf at bay—
 O happy world! could this be said of all;
 God's image in these tenements of clay!
 Would rise more promptly at His preacher's call!
 And prove a mightier bulwark of His glory!
 When in defence of earth's divinest story.

Down from these heights, we love so much to climb,
 The rhymer and his muse must now descend ;
 I meant not to apostrophise a hymn,
 Nor man's forgetful weaknesses defend.
 Through all life's lights and shadows, dazzling, dim,
 Accustom us to walk upright, to blend
 Our joys and sorrows, heaven-like trust with care ;
 Diffusing Love—and Goodness—everywhere.

This thrifty woman had some bairns at school,
 And mother-like was busy with their dinner ;
 For, this is granted—as a general rule—
 One must have vict'als, either saint or sinner ;
 A little while without them, sage, or fool
 Will note his corporation wearing thinner—
 Fading much quicker than an Autumn leaf,
 And—sans repentance—sure to come to grief.

The dame's potatoes were just piping hot,
 But plebian food for him had no temptation ;
 He fixed his gaze upon the iron pot,
 And really, 'twas a wondrous fascination.
 When speech was found, his learning failed him not,
 To vent in glowing terms his admiration—
 The pot thus praised—you guess with what intentions—
 Was but a common one, of small demensions.

The woman failed awhile to comprehend
 The fervour of her minister's laudation,
 Astonished that a common pot could lend
 A theme for such a flood of inspiration ;
 And so, to bring his praises to an end,
 She struck the key-note of his expectation—
 The pot was his, Aurora's next advance
 Would find it in the kitchen of the manse.

Alas, frail hopes ; when our fond hearts are full
 Of brightest promises, there comes a fall ;
 But, why anticipate ? wives have a rule,
 That men are short of patience—one and all—
 The matron said, that on the way to school,
 Her boys would with the little present call—
 She would not miss it, she had others there,
 Which would suffice to cook their humble fare.

“To morrow,” and “to morrow,” mused the man ;
 Not that he doubted once, the good intention ;
 In other paths his meditations ran,
 Trying to invent a circumvention ;
 To wait, or not to wait ? both led the van
 Alternately, soon ending, let me mention,
 In this resolve—delay would not give rest,
 To take it home himself would thus be best.

There is a well worn proverb, and it says—

“A bird in hand is worth”—you know what follows —
But after all, there are so many ways

A clever little bird might jink through hollows,
And soar away to join in psalms of praise ;

Or perch on leafy hedge to sing its solos—
The chance is small with combatants unequal,
Though, how can birds’ affairs affect my sequel.

’Twas fixed however after some debate,
That he himself should take the pot in hand ;
And, off he set, rejoicing that kind fate

Had cast his lot in such a generous land ;
So gratified, who would’nt feel elate ?

Yea, even jubilant beyond command—
But e’en with success one gets fully sated,
And fails at least to seem so much elated.

In going home, he took a longer road
Than that which travellers usually frequented ;
Afraid, lest reverence bearing such a load,

Should by the home-bound children be tormented.
He cherished pride, and shunned the highway broad,
Preferring by-paths afterwards repented—
Who knows what grief one step aside may bring,
Or whether flowers from full-formed buds will spring.

The day was warm, the road I said was long ;
 Longer at least than one he might have taken ;
 In person, he was like some Friars of song,
 Whose cloistered haunts are very much forsaken :
 Only for this, he might have swelled that throng
 Whose institutions long ago were shaken,
 And superseded latterly by better ;
 How much, I can't determine to the letter.

Unused to bearing loads in summer heat,
 He tried new postures as they promised ease ;
 Poised on his head, it crowned his brow quite neat ;
 Or *neatly* if the adjective don't please.
 His head thus cooled, with hat in hand, complete,
 He trod with stately mien by fields and trees—
 Till o'er his Rubicon, a burn that ran
 Through grassy lawns, two or three feet in span.

He bravely leaped it, but, on coming down,
 He found himself in darkness and confusion ;
 The pot he bore aloft like regal crown,
 Lay on his shoulders then, 'twas no delusion ;
 It hid angelic smile, or fiendish frown ;
 But onwards we must hie to a conclusion—
 You've seen some helmets barred, and, need I ask ?
 You must have heard about the "Iron Mask."

It slipped o'er that protuberance on the face,
 Which held it firmly as a dove-tail fitting;
 No doubt, the pain brought many a wild grimace;
 As efforts to remove were unremitting.
 In blind despair he tried at length to trace
 The path towards the village smithy, flitting
 Not like a full-fledged bird on ardent wing;
 But groping like an abject, smitten thing.

The poor wretch groaning under suffocation,
 And pangs uncommon to our suffering clay,
 Near'd with a sigh his wished for destination,
 Where mischief-loving idlers barred his way:
 Till some kind spirit moved with indignation,
 Seeing his state admitted no delay—
 Led him within, and eased him of his yoke,
 Which might have proved too serious for a joke.

So ends my story, when I first essayed
 To trace the fruits of covetous desires,
 'Twas far from my intention to have strayed
 Beyond the beaten path a tale requires;
 But thought builds thought, piles line on line, till stayed
 By force of will, the Muse thus foiled, retires,
 Till theme historic, or tradition oral,
 Requests its aid to point another moral.

CRAIGIE HILL.

Weel, weel I min' the daffin', gleefu' days,
 When I wi' comrades speel'd the Craigie braes ;
 Nae ither hill that could compare was near,
 Wi' equal ranges when the lift was clear ;
 The grassy summit, reached by gentlest slope,
 Was easier won than ane wi' misty top ;
 When up, the vision in a moment's glance,
 Spread ower a varied and a wide expanse—
 Of a' the kintra that was oor's at will,
 The place we likit best was Craigie hill.

On the near side, there was a quarry howe,
 A temple fit for fondest lover's vow ;
 Whaur pairs micht sit for lang their leefu' lanes,
 On broken boulders, or on heaps o' stanes,
 To tell their stories, aye sae saftly spoken ;
 Or make a fair exchange o' love's true token.
 Quate an' unseen by ony but theirsels,
 Twa folk could kiss an' coo for gey lang spells—
 How sweet the memories o' thae daft, daft days,
 To them that courtit on the Craigie braes.

Oor glory then was far abune the quarry,
 An' mony a pantin' race an' hurry-scurry
 There was to reach the top, to be the first
 To quaff the sea-fresh air for which a' thirst.

Dull is the min' an' sma' its sense o' beauty,
 Which never keeks ayont the line o' duty;
 For such, a' distant prospects shine in vain,
 And a' the glories in Aurora's train—
 On street, in factory, they can get their fill,
 Wha never yearn for charms like Craigie hill.

Nearly a score o' years hae come an' gane,
 An' yet, its pictures glimmer on my brain;
 I min' as far ower as oor e'en could sweep,
 A wavin' plain, dottit wi' kirk, an' keep,
 An' ruined castle crumblin' to the grun',
 Reminders o' a past, when Mune an' Sun
 Glintit ower wa's where gruesome pairts were played;
 When sympathy was dumb, or sair dismayed—
 In those gran' times great men could make at will
 A mount o' sacrifice o' Craigie hill.

Near, in the valley lay my native toon,
 Wi' smoke abune, an' water glistenin' roon;
 It fills a howm, an' spreads ayont baith streams:
 The ane meanderin' as if wrapped in dreams,
 To mingle wi' the brine, takin' in course
 To its big bosom the mair sportive force—
 Nae ships or steamers cleft their waves in twain,
 Wealth can' an' went there wi' the snortin' train—
 Clean, trig an' bonny it was then, an' still,
 It bears the gree far roon, frae Craigie hill.

Mair toons were spread oot-ower, an' clachans, some
 To which the name o' village hadna come ;
 Cities in embryo—if that term is richt—
 That like oorsels whiles meet untimely blicht.
 Pit lums were plentifu', an' here an' there,
 Big smeltin' furnaces sent up their glare ;
 Lichtin' the sky, when mirk had stown a pace,
 An' left us twa-three guid Scotch miles to trace—
 We thocht that naething in oor supple days,
 An' sune cam' linkin' ower the Craigie braes.

A guid bit ower stan's famous Loudon hill,
 Where Claver'se vowed oor faither's bluid to spill :
 An' left his troopers welterin' on the sod—
 A wondrous victory for the men o' God.
 Still far'er ower, are lights I canna name,
 Whiles lost in blue, their distant tints the same.
 At han' there's Burnweal tower, a massive square,
 Where Wallace watched the flamin' Barns o' Ayr—
 A monument to patriotism and skill,
 A strikin' object seen frae Craigie hill.

'Yont Ayr and Irvine, wastes o' waters streetch,
 Ye think ye hear waves breakin' on the beach ;
 Ower miles an' miles o' sea the sunlight flashes :
 On rock, or dyke the great Atlantic dashes,
 While Ailsa Craig, sae like a steppin' stane,
 Stan's like Lot's wife forlorn an' quite alane.

It might be sic a case, we dinna ken
 If *Causey giants* were as thrawn as men—
 We delve gey deep, the learned page to fill,
 Guessin' on craigs like that, an' Craigie hill.

Across the Firth, now blue, now sober grey,
 Accordin' to the lift abune the bay ;
 Without the help o' scientific glass,
 Arran's gran' panoramic glories pass ;
 Each mountain torrent like a silver streak,
 Wi' range ower range o' hills, ae cloud-crooned peak
 Liftin' its covered head abune them a',
 Dotted wi' win'-bleached rocks like virgin snaw—
 The outline o' Cantyre the distance fills
 Wi' purple haze o' slopin' heather hills.

A score o' years I say, hae come an' gane
 Since I on Craigie's croon looked ower the plain ;
 Though wider prospects since hae come between,
 My memory treasures a' its living green.
 Had I the airt poetic wreaths to braid,
 In blooms that wadna change, an' wadna fade—
 To paint a scene, a' bathed in sunset fire ;
 Or evenin's softened silvery attire ;
 There's wealth to chose, if genius gave the skill,
 Within a mornin's walk o' Craigie hill.

TO JAMES NICHOLSON,

(Author of "Kilwuddie," "Idylls o' Hame," etc.)

On being Presented with "Tibbie's Garland," with this inscription : "To my dear friend and Brother Poet."



My thanks for this, and former gifts, dear friend,
 Though I have yet to earn the title, "Poet";
 To win that name my aspirations tend,
 And when deserved our country will bestow it.

Till up the mount, in distance outlined dim,
 I'm simply—brother—not a—poet brother—
 And, if Parnassus' heights I never climb,
 I'll find my solace in the common mother.

Goals are not won by waiting for the tide,
 Havens, or ports by languid, careless drifting ;
 So, bards must labour long, and scatter wide,
 That some stray songs perchance survive time's sifting.

Thy themes are manifold, in various veins.
 Ere I was born th' immortal Muse had found thee
 Eager to sing in true and tender strains,
 The joys and sorrows ever throbbing round thee.

With graceful ease trills forth thy doric Lyre,
 In mirth and tears we wander through "Kilwuddie ;"
 While "Willie Waugh" gives grander gleams of fire,
 With riper thoughts from life's stern stage, and study.

Wi' pride we gether roun' the "Auld Hearthstane,"
 To chat wi' tickin' "Clock" an' soughin' "Bellows ;"
 Syne, stray whaur the bit "Burnie" jinks its lane,
 Or dauner 'yont wi' "Fernie" an' his fellows.

Wee flowers that hide in daisy-sprinkled grass,
 Or, moss-filled crevices, aye breathin' sweetness ;
 Tell wondrous tales in thy revealin' glass,
 That show to cuifs like me oor incompleteness.

The "Herd Boy's" thochts, the flutterin' "Birdie's Wail,"
 Should touch the feck o' folk, no gi'en to pity ;
 Thy "Tibbie's Garland" shouldna fade nor fail,
 While misery's plague spots blot baith toon an' city.

That work, so little prized, so let alone,
 Thy strongest touches show, and tenderest manner ;
 Thy songs are sung —their author oft unknown—
 Wherever floats the white-fringed Temperance banner.

White, in the Master's noblest service grown !
 What tribute shall the rescued bands bequeath thee ?
 Grim irony of fate ! when thou art gone—
 Only, a robe of living flowers to wreath thee,

TO WILLIAM WALLACE,

(Author of "Poems and Songs," etc.)

I dinna often court the Doric muse ;
 I'm fear't to face her,
 Least she may think my wooin's but a ruse
 That nicht disgrace her.

I ask her help to croon a short epistle ;
 Nae 'great high flyer ;
 Low toned it may be, as a penny whistle ;
 Screecher, an' drier !

I haena ony serious intentions,
 To sing for glory ;
 Nor yet to plan an epic o' dimensions,
 Wi' tragic story.

Her lyric springs I ken I canna broach,
 To sing like birdies ;
 An' hapless in my wale o' guid braid Scotch,
 Tak' mongrel wordies.

Failin' to shine in Doric, I maun leave it
 To you an' ithers ;
 Simple an' gran' ! sae ye may spin an' weave it
 In sangs like brithers.

Scotch to the core, on wealth or worldly station,
 I'm no a fawner ;
 Yet, aye a wee thocht prood o' my ain nation ;
 Whaure'er I dauner.

No to be bumptious—far be that thocht frae me—
 In earnest canter ;
 A wee vain-glorious when the mood is wi' me,
 For thrieveless banter.

I've seen a few mair years than you, my frien',
 Mair shades, mair crosses ;
 Though gi'en to rhyme, I dinna steek my e'en
 To gains an' losses.

An' yet, I've neither gether'd gear nor fame ;
 I'm at low level ;
 I haena spun a verse to lift my name,
 In kirk, or revel.

I ance had hopes o' shinin' 'mang the lave
 O' Scotia's singers ;
 But what o' that, let the ambitious rave !
 I hae strong fingers !

Wi' them nae doot, I'll aye can earn a crust,
 To stave aff famin' ;
 What's empty praise, when oor puir frames are dust,
 But senseless gamin.

We canna a' be stars, there's sic a spate
 O' singin' bodies,
 A' claimin' a bit rag fa'en frae the great,
 Preent to their duddies.

Yet we maun sing, tho' but to please oorsels,
 If no for siller ;
 In praise o' thistle-burrs, an' heather-bells,
 Or dusty miller.

Flowers yet bloom bonnie, should they bloom in vain ?
 Let's rise to duty !
 Let's sing their fragrance ower an' ower again,
 In lines o' beauty !

Let's sing doon wars, an' waste o' human bluid !
 Sing peace, sing sweetness !
 Oor humble influence may help for guid ;
 Used wi' discreetness.

Ne'er lend a line to hatefu' scorn or jest,
 To blackguard sorties ;
 The ootside o' the lair o' vice is best—
 A yawnin' vortice !

But why advise ye thus ? ye dinna need it ;
 Ye've aye kept clear o't ;
 That bein' weel, sing sae that a' may dread it—
 Preach aye the fear o't !

In a' religious craft I'm but a stookie,
 A puir blin' creature,
 Searchin' for God thro' a' the ravell'd bookie
 O' human nature.

Nae doot I'm often puzzled unco sair,
 An' dree lang pauses;
 Bamboozled wi' what tickles mony mair—
 Effects an' causes!

We've leaved quite lang eneuch, I'm sure to ken
 That much lood speakin',
 An' selfish prayers 'll no gang far'er ben,
 Than real heart-seekin'!

I own nae creed, at least a short bit line,
 It a' wad mention;
 An' yours I'm thinkin's no the fechtin' kin',
 That courts contention.

Deep love o' man an' woman rins richt through
 Your printit pages;
 You dinna seem a likely carle to brew
 The wrath o' ages!

Sae let me ken ye mair, my heart lies open,
 For you to read it;
 Wi' ae set purpose, for mair licht we're gropin',
 An' may God speed it!

THE CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY.



Far away from our humble home,
Our bairns are merry-making ;
Tended by love where'er they roam,
The solitudes awaking.

Across earth's flower-embroidered green,
Three pairs of feet are tripping
By burn or brae, in shade or sheen ;
With clothes now dry, now dripping.

As careless as the birds that sing,
Fed by the Father's bounty ;
Owning no squire, no lord, nor king ;
No parish, town, nor county.

If slighted law inflicts a smart,
And turns them back affrighted ;
Then, folded to a mother-heart,
That seeming wrong is righted.

Sweet darlings ! on your hearts, the gloom
Of care now presses lightly ;
While God is shedding red-rose-bloom,
To gem your faces brightly.

With frolics pass life's summer day,
Shades will come uninvited ;
Be each to each a guide or stay,
Fear flies from hearts united !

We miss your cherry cheeks and lips,
Bright eyes, so strong and steady ;
Fat hands with velvet finger tips,
For mischief always ready.

We miss even now your noisiest fun,
Defying time or season ;
Your queries in their ceaseless run,
So void, or full of reason.

We miss you out, we miss you in ;
With all your boisterous ranting ;
Fain would exchange this quiet for din ;
Hilarious jubilanting !

This stillness calls up homes, which death
Has robbed of all such treasures ;
Where stifled sob, or bated breath,
Tell of departed pleasures.

Whole hearts like ours know not the pain
Of bonds so rent asunder ?
When hopes proffered, seem all so vain,
While fresh wounds rankle under.

Our Father ! selfish thoughts forgive ;
 Such precious lambs enfolding ;
 Teach us to learn them how to live,
 Thy love, Thy light upholding !



A BIRTHDAY GREETING.



How swift the stream of Time flows onward
 Who would think a year had gone,
 Since my last fond greeting sought you,
 Bearing friendship's tenderest tone—
 Having nothing new to say,
 I repeat old truths to-day.

No bright thoughts, like brilliants glowing,
 Rise from fabled fane or dell ;
 So, in language old as Adam,
 From my heart I wish you well—
 Kindly wishes kindly said,
 Sweeten life like daily bread !

All the deeds of human story ;
All we hear, and all we say,
Seem but echoes from the ages,
That have gone before our day—
Human joys, like hopes and fears,
Kinship claim through all the years !

Fashioned like our sires before us ;
Brain and sinew, heart and soul !
Need we wonder ? that we image
All our race, from birth to goal—
Present, past, and future blend
In that life which knows no end.

Though I send this old, old greeting,
Deem it none the less sincere ;
May your life be clearer, brighter !
Happier every coming year—
Blessings spoken long ago,
Still like healing waters flow !



LAYS

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

THE LAST DAYS OF LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH.

Inglorious France! why stand you there,
 In base ignoble throngs!
 Yelling like demons in despair,
 And chanting fiendish songs?
 Why thirst for blood of freedom's friends;
 Thus vainly strive to make amends
 For past inflicted wrongs?
 You curse to-day, to-morrow bless,
 What may the world declare of this?

Is conscience an unholy thing,
 That you have spurned it so?
 Has frequent chidings failed to bring
 Your hearts beneath its glow?
 Has France so crushed all tender ties,
 Its sympathies no longer rise
 To feel for other's woe?
 Have all the sweetest chords of life
 Been silenced in this cruel strife?

No wonder that your poor king fled
 Beyond such torturing power;
 When over his defenceless head,
 He felt such threatenings lour!
 Love had been dead so long a while,
 That innocence had lost the smile
 Which cheered his leisure hour—
 Flushed joy had fled his queen's fair face,
 And grief had left its withering trace.

Captive, the king is led once more
 Within his royal hall,
 Outraged, with taunts he meekly bore
 From those who wrought his fall;
 The threatening crowds of savage men
 Surround the prison home again,
 Like hordes in drunken brawl—
 Hurling such curses at his head,
 As fill his children's hearts with dread.

He marched to parliament in pain,
 Among the wrangling crowd;
 But promise, or protest is vain,
 Amid derision loud.
 No longer even respect is shown,
 Forbade the seat, by wont his own;
 He murmured not; but bowed—
 And never once, was heard proclaim
 Aloud, his sufferings, or their shame.

Again the lawless, brutal throng
 Pursue their fiendish glee ;
 And in their wrath a siege prolong,
 Like beasts long bound, set free.
 The gallant Swiss within the walls,
 Strive to defend the noble halls,
 Scorning to turn and flee—
 In Gallia's monarch's cause they fell,
 Though hirelings from the land of Tell.

Poor king ! a prisoner, and alone,
 That tried, that trusted band ;
 All slain, or to the dungeons gone,
 Despite thy mild command.
 Thy power is taken from thee now :
 The diadem from off thy brow ;
 The sceptre from thy hand—
 The law is spurned, the rabble reigns,
 While Grace and Virtue walk in chains.

Corruption long had festered there ;
 But vengeance frowned on thee !
 Who had at heart thy people's care,
 And wished to see them free !
 Till factions ruled, till murmurs rose,
 And friends appeared in league with foes,
 Who now thy fate decree—
 Farewell to all thy peaceful dreams !
 Farewell all compromising schemes.

Dethroned, yet held a prisoner still ;
 Thy few friends forced away,
 That meaner men may taunt at will,
 And wield tyrannic sway.
 Not yet content with fixing bounds,
 The faction's meeting place resounds,
 With base intent to slay—
 Longing to make that monarch's blood,
 Precursor of a crimson flood.

They triumph over right and law ;
 The throneless king's arraigned ;
 The judges are enforced by awe ;
 The long sought end attained.
 His death decreed, the morning sun
 Shall mark the reign of blood begun ;
 A decade foully stained,
 With deeds our race may blush to hear
 Repeated to a human ear.

Forbade to bid a last farewell,
 With all he held most dear ;
 Watched like a felon in his cell ;
 Recorded, smile or tear.
 Surrounded by the coarse and vile,
 He kept his courage up the while,
 Restrained all rising fear—
 Only one favourite of the past
 Was near, as comforter at last.

It dawned at length, the solemn morn ;
 His last sunrise on earth ;
 He hears the howl of bitter scorn,
 And unaffected mirth.
 With faith buoyed up, his mien was bright ;
 No shuddering there, with death in sight,
 To him a second birth—
 Assured, he would ascend on high,
 To brighter mansions in the sky.

On the dark scaffold he proclaimed
 His innocence of crime ;
 But crowds have never felt ashamed
 Through all historic time.
 They saw with him all wrong depart ;
 Wrongs, which had seared the human heart,
 And clogged its march sublime—
 The sombre block, and muffled drum
 Foreshadowed brighter days to come.

Their sacrifice appeared serene ;
 His step was firm, though slow ;
 His thoughts were soaring o'er that scene,
 To where he hoped to go.
 He knelt, and yielded up his head ;
 Then flowed his blood so basely shed ;
 The crowd enjoyed the show—
 Like fiends insatiate, tasting gore,
 Their passions roused, demanded more.

THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS.

PART. I.

THE PRISON YARD.

In the gloomy Palace-Prison where the doomed were sent
to languish,

We may see in gleams of fancy, many faces of renown,
While on some there are deep traces of the bitterest of
anguish ;

Others show a holy calm, a few, a bold defiant frown.

Of all ages, and both sexes ; from the stooping, white-
haired father,

To the maid in girlish beauty ; or the youth with beard-
less face ;

Love-sick swain, and warrior, bravely-proud with noble
men to gather ;

From the statesman, to the coxcomb, stuffed with airs of
modelled grace.

Prison walls are so impartial, they will frown on peer or
peasant,

Clasp the august law dispenser, who has sent another there ;
They will echo any voices whether surly toned or pleasant ;
With a stoical indifference for the songs of joy or care.

Marie Antoinette there languished, once the envy of the fairest ;
 But her cheeks had lost their crimson, all her sprightliness was gone ;
 While the same great bolts and bars enclosed the purest and the rarest
 Of the men who had conspired to drive her husband from the throne.

Some who had thrown off religion, felt a softening influence stealing,
 Hearts were moved to cast their doubtings on the bosom of their God ;
 Stronger men who had been constant to their soul's divine revealing,
 Were inhaling fine discourses from their leader, Vergniaud.

Yielding not to meanest passions ; not impatient to get dying ;
 Stately and composed in manner, yet indifferent of his life ;
 Careless of his name's remembrance, on his past career relying,
 Knowing justice would be done to all real heroes in the strife.

Always thoughtful, often smiling, ever quick at comprehending
 Grave, and complex situations, dark, or puzzling to his friends ;

Seldom moved by petty weakness, and above mere vain
pretending,

A real toiler for man's glory, by humane and God-like ends.

Though in poverty, he murmured not, resigned to his
position ;

Few friends to mourn his absence, no sweet children to
caress ;

Yet of him it stands recorded, in that last depressed con-
dition ;

That instinctively he warned to every comrade in distress.

There was gifted Brissot, writing, to reveal to future ages,
The injustice of those enemies who triumphed in their fall ;
And his colleagues often listened to the reading of his
pages ;

Or indulged in moods and fancies, still the heritage of all.

While the youngest of the prisoners treated all themes
with derision,

Gensonné assumed sarcastic airs, and spoke with proud
disdain ;

Lascource involved in mystery the phantoms of his vision,
And Valaize with unfeigned ardour, yearned the martyr's
crown to gain.

Touching were the daily interviews, between the iron
railings ;

Sad, those frequent stolen meetings, with the friends who
held them dear ;

Now a father tried in vain to hush his children's plaintive
wailings ;

Then a brother yearned to wipe away a sister's falling tear.

There were victims of a grief which seldom finds a balm
for healing ;

That sought in vain the privilege, their throbbing hearts
desired,

And they hovered near the passage, tender, tearful glances
stealing;

With the fair and faithful maidens by a mutual thought
inspired.

PART II.

THE TRIAL.

On the morning of their trial, Paris heaved with wild
commotion,

Guards, and troops were massed in arms, as if afraid of
civil war ;

The populace surged onward, like a restless, angry ocean,
And filled to suffocation, the approaches to the bar.

One by one the prisoners enter, mid a death-like silence
reigning

Over all the vast assemblage, who had known their former
state ;

Some were staring, lost in wonder, some were inwardly
 complaining,
 Of the treatment of the fallen, of the fickleness of fate.

First came Ducos and Fonfrede, like classic brothers in
 their loving ;
 Lasource, then aged Sillery came leaning on his rod ;
 Fierce Valaize, his dark eye scornfully o'er all the benches
 roving ;
 Brissot followed Abbé Fauchet, last of all came Verg-
 niaud.

More were moved at his appearance than with that of
 any other ;
 Tears of sympathy were trickling down the cheeks of
 stalwart men ;
 All his comrades separated, to receive their noble brother,
 Glad to hail him as their oracle and leader, once again.

On the benches of the judges, many former friends were
 seated ;
 But they bowed their heads, ashamed to meet the eyes
 which followed them ;
 Lest it might result in wavering, and their purpose be
 defeated ;
 Well they knew their office there was not to pardon, but
 condemn.

Falsehoods then were fabricated, where the simple truth
 was wanting,
 And at times the prisoners' courage waned, they seemed
 to plead for life ;
 Allowing bitter enemies to triumph in their vaunting,
 Without one effort worthy their position in the strife.

When condemned, a thrill of horror shook the multitude
 assembled,
 Threatening looks of anger darted from a number of the
 doomed,
 Towards jurymen, and judges, who in abject terror
 trembled ;
 But the cause of fear soon vanished, as indifference was
 resumed.

Where fear was not, repentance could on no face be
 detected ;
 Not a prisoner there was likely to regret the part he played ;
 Some viewed lightly the dread sentence, as the only end
 expected,
 Through the Trial's changeful phases they had never felt
 dismayed.

As they filed along to prison, they observed a brother
 falling,
 And amidst the murmuring, Brissot bent, the prostrate
 form to raise ;

At that hour a sign of weakness would have been a
wound most galling ;

But the victim was a suicide, the grand and stern Valaizé.

They gathered round their comrade, but his heart had
ceased from beating,

Light had left the eye still fierce-like, motion each once
active limb ;

He had sought a higher judgment, who will trace in
words his greeting,

Were his guides the heirs of glory, where the light is
never dim ?

PART III.

THE LAST NIGHT.

In the great cell of the Prison, songs of joy are heard
resounding,

At a sumptuous feast provided by the kindness of a friend ;
Choicest dishes grace the tables, flowers and fruits are
there abounding,

While the dungeon's gloom is banished by a torch at
either end.

Wine is also in abundance, and youngest of their number
Are inclining to be sportive, as they drink to drown
their care ;

Saying, "Let us banish sadness, let no sombre gloom
 encumber ;
 Or o'ershadow our last evening with the spectre of despair."

"Let us all enjoy a gala-night, for there is no hereafter ;
 Eternal sleep will ere long close our eyelids with its hand."
 Speaking thus, like jesters, hired to shape their faces
 into laughter,
 While a trouble gnaws within them, they are struggling
 to command.

There were graver natures, grieving at such artifice of
 gladness,
 When they craved religious solace, in the soothing words
 of prayer ;
 Others filled with tender thoughts, of homes, now draped
 with gloom and sadness,
 Were picturing re-unions in a happier land—somewhere.

Soon the viands are laid past, the last grand farewell
 supper ended ;
 Nearly all have eaten freely, and are therefore satisfied ;
 While the hours are speeding onward, many themes are
 well contended,
 And apart, a few more sage-like, of the future prophesied.

They foretell fresh scenes of horror, women loveless,
 broken-hearted,
 And they wonder, will these tyrants live to triumph in
 such joys ;

Would the great Republic flourish when its founders
 were departed ;
 Or, their race, like little children, ask again for gilded toys.

Now and then their glances fall upon their brother's corpse
 with sorrow,
 Sent to share their gloomy quarters, through the watches
 of the night ;
 Sure of meeting, after passing through the ordeal of the
 morrow,
 When they too had cast their vestments, and were bathed
 in ambient light.

Later still, all thoughts were turned on death, and future
 resurrection,
 Every countenance assuming gentler aspects than before ;
 Hearts were softening near the prospect, minds were
 throwing off dejection,
 Wonder growing out of wonder of the contemplated shore.

Vergniaud invokes attention, all the crowd stands mute
 before him,
 Never had his theme been grander, nor his language more
 sublime ;
 Claiming for the great Creator, that the creature should
 adore him,
 Love and serve him now and ever, past the influence
 of time.

"In ourselves have we not proof" he said, "of our immortal being ;
 Must we die for this great people, with no hope of rising higher ?
 If there is not something grander yet, beyond our present seeing ;
 Why this more than mortal struggle, why this heaven-like desire ?"

"Conscience leads us to the answer, we are trusted with a duty,
 Which accomplished, we return to that just Master whom we serve ;
 And if we have acted nobly, we shall revel in his beauty ;
 If less worthily acquitted, less of glory we deserve !"

"Are we dupes for so believing, fools for listening to our conscience ?
 Shall we bury worth, and knowledge, with our bodies in yon clay ?
 Are the arguments of Science, and Philosophy but nonsense ?
 Must we mount to death to-morrow, as the ending of the play ?"

"We are doubtless great, and God-like, but the God-head lives above us !
 And our noblest act while living is the last act to be done,

That of dying for our country, leaving those behind who
 love us ,
 Going straight to God and glory, with the now ascending
 Sun!"

Golden sunbeams tint the cloud-belts, yet the converse
 is not finished ;
 They rehearse again that story, still re-told to wondering
 ears ;
 Time has never dimmed its lustre, nor its interest
 diminished,
 And these pioneers of progress, find relief in flowing tears.

PART IV.

THE EXECUTION.

Some slept awhile, but others kept astir in conversation,
 A few the gloomy corridors patrolled with measured pace ;
 Others solemnly received their church's dying consolation,
 And listened with devotion to its messengers of grace.

Abbé Lambert pressed on Brissot, as a friend to ask a
 blessing ;
 But with gentleness, and firmness, he refused the christ-
 ian's aid,

So the godly man desisted what might seem persistent
 pressing,
 He knew well the honest martyr would stand firm to what
 he said.

Lascource o'erheard the nature of the minister's appealing,
 And approached to question Brissot on that life beyond
 the sky ;
 "Yes," he said, "I always trusted in the soul's divine
 revealing,
 And for working for its freedom, I am now prepared to die."

When the hour arrived, the minions of the scaffold came
 to bind them ;
 And, while some were being pinioned, many farewell
 notes were penned,
 Sealed with tokens of affection for the loved ones left
 behind them ;
 Priceless only as mementoes, in remembrance of the friend.

One by one they wended slowly to the wagons which
 were waiting
 To convey them to the scaffold, in the distance standing
 grim ;
 Words of cheer inspired the march, hero-courage emulating,
 And their voices chimed together in a patriotic hymn.

Up the steps of death they mounted, as if leading straight
to heaven ;

All embraced before submitting to the decimating knife;
When the head of their great Leader to the ghastly heap
was given,

For a time the nation's virtue seemed extinguished with
his life.

Often shall the voice of freedom call to mind the tragic
story

Of that noble band which perished like their basely
murdered king ;

For humanity they suffered, but their monument is glory,
Of their purity and courage coming poets yet will sing.



THE SIEGE OF LYONS.



Unhappy Lyons ! poised between two strands,
Whose streams ran red and tinged the fertile lands;
Our hearts recoil on reading that dark page,
Crowded with deeds sufficient for an age.
The hand lays down that chronicle of woe—
The brain spins round as from a staggering blow ;
Can it be real ? may not the tale deceive ?
'Tis more humane to doubt than to believe
One sickens with the carnage, heaps of gore,
Pits overflow, while others gape for more.

There butchering hands remorseless wills obey,
 And hourly seize on unsuspecting prey ;
 Mock Justice, robed in freedom's vestments chaste,
 Judge without mercy, and condemn with haste ;
 The Guillotine in dealing death is slow ;
 Pris'ners increase and prisons overflow ;
 Troopers with Muskets round the victims close ;
 To slaughter friends accused of being foes –
 And when the doomed, chant some inspiring lay,
 One volley sweeps the singing choirs away.

Compare the Nimbus with the white sea-foam ;
 Compare Arcadian peace with Nero's Rome !
 Select from the most trusted source at hand ;
 The darkest deeds of any heathen land,
 Even th' orgies when a dusky monarch dies,
 Then pause and marvel ! Not in freedom's guise
 Do such barbarians act ; nor in the name
 Of Liberty pursue their hideous game.
 The pagan's sacrifice, his foes supply,
 His slaves meet pageant for th' immortal eye –
 While France to grossest passions gave her best,
 And doomed her martyrs to eternal rest.

Lyons so long a prey to fear, at last
 Resolved to lift the nightmare of the past ;
 Commerce restrained, no longer prospered there,
 And ruin filled the industrious with despair ;

The Loom was tennantless ; the working bands
 Were drafted thence to satiate war's demands.
 The factions strove to rouse the slumbering fires
 Of evil passions, and unjust desires ;
 The merchants saw with mingled hate and dread,
 A threatening storm, a scarcity of bread,
 And dared to counteract before too late,
 The leaven working in the womb of fate ;
 But all in vain, a few recoiled in fear,
 Many rejoiced to join the spoiler's cheer ;
 The theorists harangued the frantic crowd,
 And fiend-like feasted on the plaudits loud ;
 Mad Chalier, genius of the rabble crew,
 To scattered crowds like evil angel flew ;
 One, given to wild and visionary dreams,
 To plunge through blood to realise his schemes.

Taught for the church, its creed was soon outgrown,
 Its precepts scorned, uprooted, or o'erthrown ;
 He railed on God, reviled the Saviour's name,
 And sought in politics his meed of fame ;
 Conversion seemed too slow to whet desire,
 He fain would quicken with consuming fire ;
 Forgetting, none but tyrants would enforce
 A whole commune their teachings to endorse—
 Failing to mould in one design the whole,
 He vowed to immolate if not control.

'The wealthy scorned the leader and his crew,
 And, spurred to action by the doom in view ;
 Laid counter plans to have the boaster caught,
 And taste the fruitage of the lessons taught.
 Once in their toils there was no mercy shown,
 The fate prepared for them became his own ;
 Condemned by men he meant to triumph o'er,
 He sought again the faith he spurned before ;
 He kissed the crucifix beside the knife,
 And as a christian bade adieu to life.

The dread Convention other butchers call,
 Determined to avenge their comrade's fall ;
 Then Lyons rose, her freedom to defend,
 Marshalling sires and sons to that great end,
 By wrongs made desperate, swiftly sped the alarms,
 And eagerly her people flew to arms ;
 Old Royalists who mourned their vanished days,
 Came out from caves by lone, untrodden ways ;
 Long tired of exile, they preferred to die,
 Than live apart beneath an alien sky ;
 Priests, now no longer soldiers of the cross,
 Yearning for prestige to regain their loss ;
 Not all alike with ends or motives pure ;
 But all resolved to die or to endure.

This mass of combatants first swore to brave
 Anarchic fury, or to earn a grave,

They called as captain, one they understood,
 Upright and worthy, brave as he was good.
 He shrank from such a great and grave command,
 Though crushed with sorrow for his native land ;
 But, on reflection, threw his plough aside :
 And doned the patriot-soldier's robes with pride ;
 Looked fondly on his home ; embraced his wife,
 And left his smiling fields for deadly strife.

The troops of the convention, host on host
 Arrive, encircle, and at any cost
 Resolve to storm the city. From afar.
 They draft them for that fratricidal war
 They send a messenger within to tell
 The fate of those on whom their vengeance fell ;
 To urge them to consider ere too late
 The terms of mercy from the sovereign state ;
 Nor once to dream of success in the end,
 Though Spartan skill and valour might defend ;
 Through non-resistance there was safe retreat,
 While conflict, stretched them at the victor's feet
 To plead for life, when pleading would be vain,
 Amid their ruined homes, and heaps of slain.

That message fell on the defenders ears
 Like boasts, or threats with vain or idle fears ;
 Knowing of broken trusts, and callous wrong,
 Their desperate fortune made their courage strong ;

They breathe defiance till their latest breath,
And spurn all terms but victory, or death.

The guns of the besiegers open fire,
Beneath their rain of death vast crowds expire ;
Buildings are shattered by the bursting bombs :
The streets in ruins are the peoples tombs,
The old are urged to quench the treacherous flames ;
To save the children and the faithful dames.
For all, the siege proclaims a daily role,
The homes, the loved ones, fired each anxious soul,
Sisters and daughters to stern duties bend,
All alike thirsting for the one great end.

The ramparts 'neath the heavy fire give way,
But valour builds by night, defends by day ;
Withal, great breaches yawn, and patriots fall,
And the besiegers rush within the wall ;
Wild panic spreads the cry, "The foe's at hand !"
And Precy hastes there with a chosen band.

The carnage deepens as his line grows thin,
Shall justice fail, shall hordes of tyrants win ?
He cheers them on until his steed is slain ;
He bleeds himself, but heated, slights the pain ;
He waves a blood stained handkerchief on high ;
His comrades follow, echoing his cry !
They gain the breach, and grapple with the foe,
And death ensues from every quivering blow.

That conflict past, the wearied soldiers stand,
 Survey their ruined homes, their wasted land ;
 From other points distress renews its fears,
 And calls for help, arrest the victors ears ;
 Their answer—feeble from the former fray—
 Breathes still defiance like the stag at bay ;
 They march again through pools of comrades' blood,
 No heart so faint as quail before that flood.
 For life they fight, with fire their bosoms swell,
 As patriots went they forth, as heroes fell.
 A short-lived victory crowned their arms again,
 And they were masters of the blood-soaked plain
 The foe retreated to the Rhone's far shore,
 To come again far stronger than before.

Within, the remnant of Ten Thousand Braves
 Slept on their arms, or gave their comrades graves ;
 The few survivors of the previous day,
 Wounded or famished, felt their hopes give way ;
 Powerless, they watched their stores of arms and food,
 Crushed under crumbling stone, or burning wood ;
 The Hospitals were riddled with the balls,
 The wounded perishing beneath the walls.
 Lyons had sacrificed her sons and sires,
 Unmurmuring thousands formed her funeral pyres ;
 Still, dauntless courage over all prevailed,
 Till famine with its iron hand assailed—
 That power, compelled the unsubdued in arms,
 To leave the scenes engulfed in wars alarms.

They held a conclave in the hush of night,
 Discussed at length the project of a flight ;
 Resolved to shield their helpless ones or die,
 Praying for succour from the Lord on high
 Death faced them standing still, or breaking through,
 This, with but flickering hopes they dared to do.

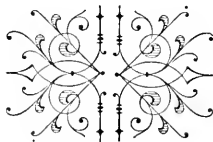
The dawn advances, charged with life or death,
 The famished ranks discourse with bated breath
 While forming squares, the families ranged between.
 Mournfully, each surveys the ghastly scene,
 In two divisions, spread across the plain,
 Exchanging hopes to meet on earth again—
 Hope, frail at best ; often a transient gleam,
 Which flashes bright, to vanish like a dream.

Of one division, none survived that day ;
 Women and children, all were swept away :
 Mercy was never asked, no life was spared,
 All died with those they loved, their graves they shared.

The other in its progress was assailed
 By walls of steel, and line on line impaled ;
 Their path was strewn with bodies of the slain,
 Who met their end with valour, or disdain ;
 All nature seemed in league against the brave,
 And all their country offered, was the grave.

Scarce ten of every thousand then survived,
Of all the vestiges of hope deprived ;
These, Precy called together, they obey
This last command as at the opening fray ;
He said, their lives were promised, his was sought,
To crown the victory then so dearly bought.
He wished to leave them, they to happier days,
While he would safety seek by secret ways ;
He then looked fondly on the friends around,
Broke his good sword, and threw it on the ground—
And, he who bravely answered to their call,
Leapt from his horse, and bade adieu to all.

Shortly after the General left them, the Forces of the Government through a misunderstanding, arising from the escape of their leader ; fell on the remainder of the Lyonnaise, and literally exterminated them ; not a man of them was known to have escaped.





A
BROTHER'S REVENGE,

OR

GOOD FOR EVIL.

AN ANTIQUE STORY.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The incidents of the following Poem are so well known to readers of Bible history that a note of introduction may seem uncalled for; and, were this not in some sense, a departure from use and wont, I would not trouble my reader with any.

I have neither consulted Travellers nor Commentators for theories or explanations concerning the moral principles involved: the Tale as told in the Scriptures—to a person of ordinary intelligence—conveys its own moral, without the aid of an interpreter to read between the lines, and to warp the judgement of common-sense.

It may be due to the influence of training through many centuries, that poets have been chary in writing of bible characters except in terms of unstinted adulation, thereby using their talent or genius to varnish over or preserve that which—if denuded of its gloss or halo, and exposed in its native nakedness—would not survive the first breath of criticism.

For the facts of the story I am not responsible: for the method of handling these I must be held so; therefore, while I have endeavoured not to misstate the facts, I make no apology for using the gift of our common humanity, in the pointing out of error, and clearing up of misconceptions, old or new.

In this case as in many others, results may have been over-estimated, and expectations altogether vain: if it perish in its birth-labour, it will not be that the theme lacks interest, but because of inherent faults in the work as placed before you; if on the other hand it is the means of stirring up further enquiry in the domains of Truth, it will have achieved a not quite unworthy purpose, and partly fulfilled the hopes of the author.

A BROTHER'S REVENGE,

OR

GOOD FOR EVIL.



1

In times remote, ere Greece or Rome had birth,
 Whose myths we gather as traditions hoary ;
 In that dim past when sages walked the earth,
 Whose words speak yet in lines of living glory ;
 Though of historians there was then a dearth :
 Sufficient is recorded for my story—
 Stories, in fact, have less with *fact* to do
 Than some imagine, though they seem so true.

2

On slopes bespangled with the brightest bloom,
 Whence milk and honey were in plenty flowing,
 The air delicious as a sweet perfume—
 With song-birds singing, and with cattle lowing.
 Nature showered only smiles, withheld her gloom,
 And scattered all her pleasures worth the knowing—
 A paradise, if such on earth could be,
 Without the shadow of a tempting tree.

And yet 'twas but a corner, one might say,
This spot where nature lavished her carresses ;
Bounded on every side by deserts grey,
And blistered hills 'mid rock-strewn wildernesses ;
Blasted, as if accursed on some dread day,
The vales disrobed, and scorch'd the mountain tresses,
Leaving a lovely garden here and there,
Guarded by frowning peaks in gaunt despair.

I have not seen the home of that loved tribe,
Its land-locked seas or lakes, and winding feeders ;
I have not seen the twain I would describe,
To introduce them life-like to my readers.
Not mine the golden key which opens wide
The gates of praise, or side-ways to the leaders—
So, with originals beyond command,
My pictures must be taken second hand.

With good and bad combined, the land was small,
Compared with western vale or rolling prairie ;
Kings had their realms within a Bugle's call—
A train of Slaves or Mules sufficed to carry
Their camps, their stores, their temples, gods and all,
When bent on war, or seeking maids to marry—
If when away a stronger seized their place,
They robbed a weaker tribe with equal grace.

A kingdom on a fifty acre field !

Aye, laugh ye modern north-men and get warmer.
Kings had not far to carry sword and shield ;

Swains no great choice in seeking for a charmer ;
Just think, of kings enforced to cringe and yield ;

Yea ! quake with fear in presence of a farmer—
Yet so it was in those old regal days,
Which chroniclers make mighty with their praise.

Their city-strongholds—though it seems so queer—

Comprised some scores of huts with one big shanty
In which the nation met to taste good cheer ;

Minus good water which was sometimes scanty ;
In which case there was home-made wine or beer

Brewed by the reigning queen or people's *aunt*—
Nations then gathered like a family party,
The king as head, gave each a greeting hearty.

But I am telling you too much before,

And padding may be in demand hereafter ;
The tale is all-through serious to the core ;

Though here and there may ooze a little laughter.
Laughter is sacred, dancing was of yore,

And jingling bells, and gongs, and things still dafter—
Life there was primitive, and knowledge bounded
By the few hills with which they were surrounded.

My heroes were—twin brothers—if you please,
 Yet not alike by mother's love befriended.
 The younger lived at home, a life of ease,
 The elder to the hills and valleys wended,
 Hunting for game among the scrub and trees,
 And thus his aged father's wants attended—
 A savage truly, rudely dressed I ween,
 Yet altogether suited to the scene.

Stately his mien this first-born of the two,
 And strong as stately—aspect, rough and hairy ;
 In dealings blunt, in friendship straight and true ;
 Not given to railing, nor in moods to vary—
 Pleasing withal—well versed in how to woo,
 And win besides, dark eastern belle or fairy—
 In Love's affairs he wavered not nor tarried,
 And ere the time I speak of was twice married.

Not married, widowed, and thus wed again ;
 Two wives between them held him in possession ;
 A practice common with this people then,
 And, spite of change, or modern intercession,
 Is, and is always likely to remain
 An article of faith which blocks progression—
 Some peoples mend when things get out of joint,
 But Eastern Races have no turning point.

Unless the turning point is for the worse ;
 They seldom rise, and wallowing, sink the lower.
 Over these lands there seems to brood a curse
 Which drags them down ; some quick, and others slower—
 “Still, still beloved ! earth’s garden-ground, the nurse
 Of lofty aspirations—the bestower
 Of Him : the brightest, surest guiding star,
 That ever blessed our world from near or far.”

“Can it be otherwise ? with Love dethroned,
 With Passion reigning the supreme desire ;
 The brutal lusts of manhood overgrown ;
 The hearts of Women trampled in the mire—
 Bought, sold, and trifled with ere fully blown :
 All hope crushed out of ever rising higher—
 Victims of evil, worse than common slaves,
 Trapped from their youth, and barred in living graves.”

“Can it be otherwise ? when half mankind,
 The fairer and the better half is blighted ;
 The beautiful, to all earth’s beauties blind ;
 Learning’s lamp early quenched, if ever lighted
 Estranged from all the loftier flights of mind ;
 To-day, the prey of lust, to-morrow slighted—
 Their future life made doubtful, or to be
 A prolongation of their misery.”

“Can it be otherwise? when countless years,
 Repeat the warning, but to be neglected;
 Faith after Faith arises—disappears;
 Age following age, that system is protected.
 No balm for breaking hearts, no salve for tears;
 The gospel which might heal the sore’s rejected—
 Thus ignorance sustains its Godless reign,
 And jeers the galling bonds, the festering pain.”

“Rise swarthy brother! child of burning skies!
 Open thy sun-brown eyes and look before thee;
 See North and West, thy paler brethren rise,
 To grander heights than ere thy valour bore thee!
 Read in the love-light of that sister’s eyes,
 A love, which cherished, might to bliss restore thee—
 Then go at once! and by thy sunlit waters,
 Raise to the level of thy heart thy daughters.”

What of the younger brother shall I say?
 I would be just to both even to the letter,
 And to be just, one’s judgement must have sway—
 Must spurn the very semblance of a fetter.
 I know it is quite common in our day,
 For those who think in crowds to think him better;
 Perchance because more favoured than his brother—
 While loving neither, I prefer the other.

I never ask the crowds what they believe,
 So as to shape my faith and work to follow :
 I seek myself God's purpose, and achieve
 That end if possible ; discarding hollow
 And sham pretences, hoisted to deceive.
 I'd rather bend to Thor, or Greek Apollo,
 Than feign a fervour for an unloved cause,
 Or chorus to the popular applause !

Mistake me not, I know the pain—the price
 The world exacts from those who stand alone ;
 It trusts the lying tongue, the false device,
 And turns its shoulder—saying, friendship's gone—
 Or chills with finger tips like Lapland ice,
 As if such things as feelings were unknown—
 It means, a life without a friend's embrace,
 Averted eyes when smiles should wreath the face.

Yet, fearless of the cost I seize the rein,
 And urge my wayward fancy up the hill
 Scanning at intervals the teeming plain,
 Anon, attempting higher stages still—
 Regardless of the threats that would restrain—
 Obedient only to the Perfect Will—
 That Power, which planted the supreme desire ;
 Which always beckons upward, onward—higher !

21

I love the People! wish them always right ;
 I stand or fall among the toiling masses :
 Waging a constant war with vested might —
 Uncompromising combat with the classes !
 Shoulder to shoulder in a bloodless fight ;
 Love conquering fields, and storming forts and passes—
 Till Right prevails! till tyranny is ended,
 And all the shades of human nature blended.

22

I love the People! I desire their weal ;
 But shall not flatter in and out of season !
 One may to human interests be leal,
 Yet lash all vices with the whip of reason ;
 And in affairs of conscience, take appeal
 To One Just Judge, whom but to slight is treason—
 There, and there only should we bow the head,
 And in that holy Presence, humbly tread.

23

Now speaking straight, I like wild Esau best,
 In spite of blemishes which I have noted ;
 The sun-tanned, red-haired savage, rudely dressed,
 Is nobler far than Jacob, richly coated—
 Fondled and feasted in the parent nest,
 And in the lone maternal counsel voted—
 Heir to his father's fields and sundry things,
 Father of nations, prophets, priests and kings.

And what is there resolved, must come to pass,

The fiat once sent forth, is ne'er remitted ;
 "Man sees but darkly, as if through a glass,"

I think 'tis said ; but woman sharper witted,
 Determines, plans, and carries, and alas !

The weaker must succumb—man yields—unfitted
 To wage contention, when superior force
 Subdues him, or compels, he must endorse.

It has been so since human life began,

And, doubtless it is well it has been so ;
 All over—not with every plot or plan—

In this one, perfected so long ago,
 Duplicity and cunning led the van,

And struck from ambush, at its own, a blow—
 Then, in the darkness carried off the spoil,
 Leaving him naked on his native soil.

These two were twins as I have said before.—

Twin-born, though not twin-souled by any measure ;
 Esau had only a few minutes more

Of breathing time, if not of actual pleasure
 Over his brother ; still, 'twas sufficient store,

To legalise his claim to Isaac's treasure—
 In serfs, in flocks and herds, in corn and wine,
 Handed from sire to son along the line.

I don't defend this practice, but the right—
 If right it was—has not been much disputed.
 Esau again—from what is said—made light
 Of all possessions known, and all reputed ;
 Knowing the forces which he loved to fight,
 And to his wild life eminently suited—
 Hungry and tired, one day in Jacob's cottage,
 He sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage.

Some justify that bargain, but not I,
 There is no Code of Morals that I know ;
 Christian or Pagan, that would even try ;
 Though like a mental twist, allowed to grow
 For ages ; Truth will out—like murder—cry
 To heaven for vengeance ! Sure, though slow,
 All fraud shall be exposed, even this ! so long
 The bulwark of a nation built on wrong.

How could the Highest, sanction such an act ?
 How register such deeds as these in heaven ?
 Save as a record of the damning fact ;
 That man to such extremity was driven
 By lust of gain ; which of us could exact
 Such terms to day, and hope to be forgiven—
 Here, in this stage of manhood's vigorous prime,
 When crowds condone, or justify the crime ?

Something of this hereafter may be said ;

Meantime, we come to what we term "The tide
In the affairs of" both these men, which led

Them both to fortune. Led them to divide
Their scene of action ; like a stream whose bed

Is cleft in two, the waters wandering wide—
Each section seeking strange and distant plains,
Gliding o'er rocks, and sundering mountain chains.

They had not truly grown up side by side,

From boyhood, nature pulled them different ways ;
And likely, in the flush of manhood's pride—

Without mean craftiness, which always plays
Such havoc—would have chosen to abide

As far apart as sunlight stretched its rays—
"Where distance" as the poet says so true,
Might then have "lent enchantment to the view."

Ah ! always if—and would—or could—or should,

They might have, yes, but—somehow, didn't do it,
Small, wondrous words, in any tense or mood ;

There is a way—no doubt—could one pursue it ;
We follow it awhile, with no great good,

Then tired with fretting, aimlessly fall through it—
This by the by—though not quite in my story—
May throw a faint light on the allegory.

Now, for a moment I retrace my way,
 To render explanations more complete—
 Not at-all-needful some might truly say,
 As every child the story can repeat.
 “Precisely so ! but gentle reader, stay !
 You would not therefore counsel my retreat—
 All know it, yet all have not read aright,
 On these I shed this ray of clearer light.

I take my stand on this resolve at least ;
 But who will follow wheresoe’er I lead ?
 A man may spread a very tempting feast,
 And get but sorry, sorry thanks indeed.
 Man is so “Poor in thanks,” not so the beast ;
 If not in words its tell-tale eyes will plead
 In unfeigned fondness for a little more
 Licking the hand from which proceeds the store.

I labour not for thanks, but to fulfil
 My portion of the universal task,
 Devolving on our race ; I would instil
 Deep love of Virtue ; never seek to bask
 In rays of self-laudation. Will
 Our God endorse transparent shams ? we ask !
 Must every coming age the cry repeat ?
 That heaven showers crowns on falsehood and deceit.

"We have a Mission which we must obey ;
 Not borne on wings across a Jasper sea ;
 Nor fiery chariot through the Milky Way.
 No Lightning flashes it to you or me ;
 But in "The Still Small Voice" it comes by day,
 And hovers round, unseen, and silently—
 What is the messenger ? We cannot tell ;
 Yet, steadfast stays the influence of the spell !"

"Gone are those days of pillar'd "Cloud" or "Fire,"
 Of "Wrestling Angels," and of guiding "Stars" ;
 If—somewhere else—there lingers a desire
 To render earth-life sweeter, end its jars ;
 Myriads of waiting, anxious souls aspire
 To hold communion ; but, alas ! the bars
 Keep all of earth, and all of heaven asunder,
 And neither yield to prayer, nor Sinai's thunder !"

"Yet, not the less from heaven the message comes !
 So long as there are wrongs to need redress—
 So long as Christian Cities have their Slums ;
 Where millions grovel in such dire distress—
 While that Religion—sent to cheer—benumbs,
 Chills, curses shivering souls 'twas meant to bless—
 Till the great victory of the "Cross" is won,
 The work of heaven, on earth, shall not be done !"

"God spake unto "The Fathers"—it is said—

Speaks He not yet unto "The Sons" to-day.

He—in the past— a "Chosen People" led

From bondage, through a desert's tortuous way

Where, by a Miracle the host was fed ;

Instructed whom to spare, and whom to slay—

What are those people, where their glory now ?

Has "Israel's God" repented of his vow !"

"All are God's People ! All ! From first to last—

His chosen, if you will—The meanest child

That ever breathed in all the hoary past ;

The rude barbarian in his desert wild—

The blind-proud scion of exclusive caste—

The saint in ecstasy, the sin-defiled—

God cannot help but choose, they are His Own !

His Love shall gather, where His Love hath sown ?"

For all the world I would not seem unjust,

And, as I said before, I have not forded

The sacred river : Jordan, yet I trust

I shall be true to what we find recorded.

Failing contemporary evidence, we must

Accept the statement of the race, that lorded

"From Dan to Beer-sheba" so many centuries,

And take at *their own* value, their inventories.

And these for certain do not fall far short
 Of their full value, rather exceeding,
 In my opinion—if I *dare retort*—
 Fairly, within the limits of *good breeding*.
 No wonder Israel's people, made good sport
 For Philistines who had less light and *leading*—
 It needs but little Culture to see through
 The grasping nature of the modern Jew.

Abraham did some questionable things,
 So all men do at times—and for that matter,
 We need not search too keen nor probe the springs
 Of all his actions : only, men will flatter
 Some beings out of reason ! give them wings
 To soar above all heads—e'en let some scatter
 Dust in our eyes to hide from us their stature,
 Till we admit a superhuman nature.

Sarah and Abr'am lived for many years,
 So far as known in conjugal affection ;
 For many decades childless, it appears—
 Dubious no doubt at times of their selection
 As founders of a people. Full of fears
 He once played off the brother for protection—
 Though, how a change of name could thus achieve it,
 Passes my comprehension to perceive it.

The hist'ry says so and we must receive it—

We have no choice ; and millions seeing clearer,
Require the statement only to believe it

Without a question ; claiming to be nearer
Thereby to heaven for such belief. Conceive it !

How an unreasoning creature shall be dearer
In the Creator's sight, I want to know !
And shall not credit till I find it so.

Sarah was aged when her son was born,

And joy was hers without a doubt that day.
Some years before, when hopeless and forlorn,

Her maid gave birth to Ishmael—by the way—
Ishmael was loved until that fateful morn

When Isaac came. Peace could no longer stay—
It left that household, to return no more,
Till Hagar and her son were shewn the door.

“Hist'ry repeats itself.” This maxim, old,

With fresh recurrence, still retains its youth ;
And this ! of all the stories ever tolds

Illustrates well the maxim's general truth.
When Isaac dwelt in Gerar, he made bold

To call Rebekah—sister—lest, forsooth
Some native might cast loving eyes upon her,
Redounding to his loss, and her dishonour.

On this coincidence I need not dwell ;
 It seemed so queer I could not but relate it.
 Strange, both got barren wives ; more strange to tell
 Two sons apiece, when if I dare to state it ;
 One would have served the purpose quite as well —
 If not far better. Look through it—penetrate it !
 Only one blessing was *for one* provided,
 And *that* on no pretence could be divided.

How one might sermonize on such a theme ;
 Did time, and space, and audience not forbid it.
 O ! for one quick bright flash, one lightning gleam,
 To pierce the inner soul, to cleanse, to rid it
 Of the illusions of this noon-day dream ;
 Which takes for granted that God said or did it—
 Thought, deed, which man in reason, would disown,
 Leaving the majesty of God alone !

Isaac was old, and likewise, nearly blind—
 More than twice-told th' allotted span of years
 Had flown since first he gazed upon his kind.
 When past his prime his Lord allayed his fears,
 And gave contentment to his troubled mind,
 By yielding him the boon long craved in tears—
 Till then, no pratling child had blessed his tent,
 He prayed to God, and lo ! the two were sent.

51

'Tis strange that hearts, though crushed with other cares,
 Though chequered in their course—at longest brief—
 Should long for sweet, fresh flowers among the tares ;
 Though often fading ere the Autumn leaf.
 Cherubs, for whom the mother-hand prepares,
 Brought hence in pain and joy, borne thence in grief—
 'Tis strange ! and yet, 'tis nature's high behest,
 That all should welcome every coming guest.

52

He welcomed his, and watched them as they grew,—
 Both of them—into strong and healthy men ;
 Likely to act their parts, to carry through
 God's purpose writ on hearts, *sans* hand or pen ;
 Their God to Abraham's and Isaac's view,
 Revealed His Will ; kept secret until then—
 Never endorsed in Sanscrit nor Arabic ;
 Nor in Egyptian hieroglyph, syllabic.

53

Nor ancient Chinese. Although eastern skies
 Enwrapt that land, they had not heard about it.
 Of Earth's full size, they could not even surmise,
 Or dream of it sufficiently to doubt it.
 The known, gave room for all their enterprise
 As for the unknown ; they could live without it—
 What a small world for our great age of hurry,
 A mimic stage for so much fret and worry.

Within their world they paced in peace of mind,
 Without a scrip to guide, or give them trouble;
 Without a priest to conjure wave or wind :
 Without a seer blest with seeing double.
 Each in himself was priest and seer combined ;
 Not one to mock belief, or prove 't a bubble—
 Abr'am kept it close till near his death,
 And Isaac almost till his latest breath.

Isaac, I said was old and full of years,
 Past any hope of useful action here ;
 And, Esau summoned to his couch ; appears.
 He hearkened with a ready, willing ear,
 But so did other anxious listening ears;
 Eavesdropping with intent to interfere—
 To set aside the plan by subtle scheming,
 Matured by noon-day, not by midnight dreaming.

The old man feeling death was drawing nigh,
 Desired to bless his son before his end;
 And as a prelude bade him outward hie
 To fetch some venison of finest blend
 To nerve him ere he took his long goodbye.
 The mother, meanwhile, seeming to attend
 To household duties, watched that son depart,
 Then turned to work the plot which filled her heart

57

She searched for Jacob, told him all she heard,
 And then unfolded what she meant to do—
 Warning him of the fears he must discard—
 To always keep the central point in view.
 "Think" she said "of the blessing and reward,
 Even though a curse should follow, not on you
 But on myself will all the vengeance fall,
 For having made, while you but fired the ball."

58

The thought is hers, the words no doubt are mine,
 Of firing rifle balls she could not know.
 I modernize Rebekah in that line,
 And have a right to, wherefore should I go
 To that old valley, where their bones recline—
 Where still the tide of life moves on so slow—
 That I perchance might lift the very phrase
 Which pinned down Jacob to obedient ways.

59

Obedient, but not always truthful ways
 Those two don't now, nor did they go together
 In dim and distant patriarchal days,
 When family ties were held by firmer tether;
 And in this effort to disperse the haze,
 I feel compelled to raise the question, whether—
 A scheme of self-aggrandizement or love,
 Was the sole ruling passion in this dove.

Without prolonging mental turns and twists,
 I choose without irreverence, to hold
 To selfishness and oust Love from the lists.

To stand alone, I said one must be bold,
 And brave as well as bold, to pierce the mists—
 To face the freshet's fierce and bitter cold—
 To guard the open forts on cheerless heights,
 And battle there for man's divinest rights.

Yet some can face loud clamours loudest shont,
 The scorching blaze of passion's vengeful fire;
 No threat or pain can put the force to route,
 Who fain would drag God's truth from out the mire,
 Disprove beyond the shadow of a doubt,
 All statements tending to make God a liar—
 If men would use aright the light that's given,
 The vale might not look dark which leads to heaven.

Most men believe too little, or too much ;
 While some dispute what others deem inspired :
 The priests find out the weaknesses of such,
 And prime them with the knowledge that's desired ;
 So stunt the mind, that it may need a crutch,
 Just strong enough to bear the length required—
 Within those folds where ignorance is bliss,
 They little want, and therefore little miss.

Thrice happy bands, adventureless, yet free !

All heights are measured that your feet may climb ;
The partly known, to you is chartless sea ;

All new discoveries, threats to life and limb.
You claim all good that is, and is to be ;

All perfect music for your holy hymn—
Yet, while you sleep, others may soar and sing !
And to your thankless hearts their trophies bring.

But, back again to Jacob we must come,

To chronicle his smart impersonation.

I wondered, if on this I'd put my thumb,

Or speak regardless of vituperation.

Then come forth Muse! though henceforth thou art dumb

Or deaf to all the music of creation!

This *Mæ* of Jacob's was too smart by half,

It reads just like a joke, to make one laugh !

While Esau hunted for his quest afar,

Jacob found his in an adjacent field,

And ran home laden as with spoil from war;

A kid o'er either arm, enough to yield

A dinner for a dozen men at *par* !

With their digestion perfect, fit to wield

The sledge of Thor, or wave a flaunting banner

Over a host in quite a vigorous manner

The old man's appetite was more than *good*;
 Two kids in savoury stew, with bread and wine,
 Was quite a lusty meal of dainty food,
 To set before *one man*, who wished to dine ;
 One, whose condition then was understood
 To be just trembling on the border line—
 A state, in which a morsel, howe'er nice,
 Is sometimes swallowed at a fearful price.

The stew prepared according to command :
 Another problem forced itself in view—
 One must not only bring one's fish to land,
 But study how to get to market too—
 'Twas boldly faced, and just as boldly planned,
 And in the crisis, quickly carried through—
 Time was so precious, none could well be lost,
 As both their lives might go to pay the cost.

The gentle kids a double purpose served—
 The meat for feast, the skins in gloves were made
 For Jacob's hands. I never have observed
 Isaac's wife mentioned by the Glover Trade
 As *sole Inventor*. True, the occasion nerved
 Her to accomplish this without parade—
 As advertising would have spoiled her game,
 'Twas best for her to sacrifice her fame.

His neck was girdled with the selfsame skin ;
 For, Esau being hairy, so must he
 In counterfeiting Esau, march right in
 As like as ever a disguise could be.
 Detection then would raise an awful din,
 Likely enough to end in tragedy—
 Who would have kept wronged Esau's rage in bounds,
 On his returning from the hunting grounds ?

Jacob went in, "who's there ?" the father said,
 "Thy first born Esau," he at once replied,
 "I have returned with venison and bread
 That thou may'st eat thereof till satisfied;
 When done, I wait thy blessing on my head."
 "How come ye back so soon" the father cried—
 "You seem to be so early from the chase
 That I must feel you, close in my embrace !"

"Esau my son ! are you in truth that son ?
 Come, let me feel—you know I cannot see,
 The voice is like my Jacob's in its tone !
 Yet, these are Esau's hands, it seems to me !
 How sweet in age, when life is nearly done,
 To smell the greenness of the fields in thee—
 I would be sure, so, tell me once again,
 That thou art Esau, first-born of the twain !"

"I'm truly he! I come thus early back

With that same venison so loved of yore,
Thy God went forth with me along the track,

And gave me that, so often given before
To feast his servant. Thou wilt nothing lack!

Yea, though thy pressing needs were ten times more!"
Thus Jacob lied to God and Isaac, twice
Using the sacred name to shield his vice.

Still, Isaac blessed him, as he would have done

His brother Esau, had he been in time.

The blessing seemed to wait on either son,

And heaven approved the blunder and the crime;
Fixing as with its seal the falsely won!

What deeds of darkness blot that sunny clime!
Corruption blending with its songs sublime,
Trailing its great Jehovah's name through slime!

When such is sanctioned in Religion's name!

When all with open eyes its pages turn;
Shall youth be able to suppress its shame:

That glowing index of the thoughts that burn!
Restrain its wrath from bursting into flame!

Destroying altars a pure faith should spurn—
And who would mourn? if purer fanes should rise,
To bless the Author of the earth and skies!

When such is sanctioned in Religion's name !

Need Wisdom marvel that men turn away
And curse it as a mockery, craze, or game

Which priests for filthy lucre wildly play !
When such is sanctioned, it is hard to blame

The searchers who have wandered far astray—
Who rather chose opprobrium, or the rod,
Than purchased favours from this Jacob's God.

Of course, the times we speak of were remote,
And men laid claim to closer kin with heaven ;
And were it but—recorded life—and thought

Within the pages of the Scriptures given,
One might o'erlook an error, or a blot ;

Yea ! boast of generations having striven
To find a purer source of light and joy
Than mankind knew when Isaac was a boy.

We can no more go back on what has been,
Than middle age can bask in childhood's glee ;
The centuries of change that intervene,

Render it difficult for us to see
The motives of the actors on the scene ;

Yet, howsoever wide the gap may be—
Those deeds, reviewed in any age's light,
No Sphinx, or riddle-reader can make right !

The moral of those actions shall not hide,
 Though toned and hallowed o'er with sacred song.
 Religious bigotry and canting pride,
 Have been their shields and bulwarks for so long ;
 Cornered by Education's rising tide,
 Which undermines the buttresses of wrong—
 The spread of knowledge, full and free to all,
 Must hasten on the mammoth : Falsehood's fall !

When Jacob—let me now proceed to state—
 Secured his brother's blessing and departed ;
 That brother entered the same door, or gate,
 Bearing his message, pleased-like and light-hearted.
 Fondly he asked his sire to rise and eat.
 Then Isaac from his couch in terror started—
 As if a ghost had been the cunning thief,
 Who had retreated with the stolen brief.

Then Isaac told the tale to tingling ears.
 I need not now repeat it o'er again ;
 Its hearing first unnerved the son to tears ;
 The strong made man to writhe in conscious pain.
 That anguish left no trace on future years ;
 Which brought at length a blessing in their train—
 Just then, he had small cause to love his brother,
 And almost less to dote on such a mother.

81

For every wound there comes a healing balm,
 Unless the patient perish in despair.
 Soon, over Esau's mind there came a calm,
 Born of the consciousness of strength to bear,
 Without the sweetening cadence of a psalm ;
 Without the healing influence of prayer—
 These as we know them, were to him unknown,
 In God's earth, almost Godless and alone.

82

Then flashed across his mind this happy thought,
 If Jacob could be truly blest—or through,
 A gross mistake, a blessing could be bought ;
 Should he, who acted honestly and true,
 Not yet secure the blessing which he sought ?
 By promise his, and therefore but his due—
 This was the answer, at their God's behest—
 Jacob the blessing had, he would be blest.

83

This blessing constituted Jacob chief,
 Lord over Esau, and his brethren too ;
 What brethren, pray ? We turn in vain each leaf
 To find who were the brethren, whether few
 Or many, but our efforts come to grief ;
 Beyond the father's word there is no clue—
 But this seems certain ; through his chequered life,
 No brother toiled for him in peace or strife !

Esau in tears implored a blessing still ;
 He seemed so loathe to leave the house without it.
 This savage recognised a higher will,
 And never once perhaps had dared to doubt it.
 Few such examples, Antique pages fill,
 His rugged faith had something grand about it—
 A trust that human words—mere waves of breath—
 Would influence him after Isaac's death.

However high our scale, however low !
 We always worship, at our worst or best !
 For something, all mankind a reverence show ;
 An Idol, naked, or with tinsel dressed ;
 A fetish, or the marsh-damp's fitful glow :
 A hero, or an ancestor at rest—
 An evil sprite, or spiteful fairy elf ;
 While some, who scorn all else, must worship self.

Esau had some dim notion of a power
 Other than what he saw, but in what nook,
 What shadowed crevice, dell, or tangled bower
 It dwelt ; or what strange shape it took ;
 He guessed not. So, the nature of the dower
 Such blessings brought, no learned sage or book
 Could clearly tell. This he believed at least :
 His God was great, his father : God's high priest.

And keeping steady to his strongest point,

He gained a sort of blessing after all ;

Hazy, and just a little out of joint ;

He was to serve his brother at his call—

Jacob ! whom God would yet with oil anoint !

Jacob ! whose seed would yet subvert the fall—

But when he grew to have a great dominion,

He might take flight on independent pinion.

I may revert to this before I end,

But on the story goes and so must I !

Vowing no crooked courses to defend.

Esau reflecting Isaac soon would die,

Resolved to kill his brother, thus amend

That which he could not otherwise defy.

Rebekah counteracted this intention,

By an original, humane invention.

She could not lose two sons in one fell day,

One loved, one little short of being hated :

So she unfolded in her winning way

A likely tale. Of course she underrated

Esau's two wives ; likewise the race which they

Were come of, and in conclusion, stated

The plans she had been harbouring in her mind,

For Jacob's flight, her relatives to find.

Isaac consenting, called his younger son ;
 Bless'd him again, as he had done before,
 Then bade him go his way, and journey on
 To where his Uncle Laban dwelt of yore.
 There, one of Canaan's daughters might be won,
 As Jacob had been counselled to abhor
 The daughters of that land which gave him birth,
 Of all the fair ones of the peopled earth.

Then he set out on foot, and quite alone,
 To travel to a strange and distant place ;
 By day: the sun in all its brilliance shone !
 By night: the moon enabled him to trace
 A path which led through desert tracts unknown ;
 Afraid to meet therein a human face—
 Lest it might be th' avenger on his path,
 Bent on accomplishing his brother's wrath.

Over those solitudes so long ago,
 The Caravan had not been instituted.
 Unknown as yet, the Camel, safe though slow—
 Unknown the "Arab Steed," the swift, sure-footed.
 Riches upon these people seemed to flow ;
 Yet their inventive powers were not deep-rooted—
 Cunning was native, that they had to spare ;
 It marks their children yet through fost'ring care.

Foot-sore and tired, it gives relief to yawn ;
 Sleep often masters man without a pillow :
 Happy if stretched on green and flowery lawn,
 Shaded by twining boughs, or drooping willow ;
 From custom, one may sleep even after dawn,
 Careering wildly on a storm-tossed billow—
 Sleep is in any case a precious thing,
 Though often, as the poet says, “Denied a king.”

In that vast, solemn stillness, Jacob slept ;
 And on his stony pillow, dreamt a dream,
 The vista brightening as the night shades crept
 The closer round him. No bright sparkling stream
 Rippled o'er pebbles by his side, and kept
 His soul in tune, or gave his mind a theme—
 The dreary aspect of the scene all round,
 Made his sleep deeper on that dewless ground.

He sees a ladder resting on the sands,
 And sloping upward to the vaulted sky ;
 The God of Isaac at heav'ns threshold stands ;
 While many angel forms are hovering nigh—
 Ascending and descending, with commands ;
 Messages from the throne of the Most High—
 Bearing that healing balm which Love imparts,
 To weary laden souls and sinking hearts.

God spake to Jacob, told him not to fear ;
 To put on courage and go forward brave.
 Charged him, to all His counsel to give ear—
 To trust Him, always ; He alone could save !
 The land he slept on, bathed in sunshine clear,
 To him, and to his seed henceforth He gave—
 Stretching far north and south, and east and west,
 Till through him, all the earth would yet be blest.

Much more he dreamt, and then he waked from sleep
 Trembling all over—though it was not cold ;
 The sun was starting on its upward sweep,
 Capping the purple hills with tips of gold.
 No sound disturbed these solitudes so deep,
 Grim, desolate—magnificently bold—
 Sol poured o'er wastes of rock and sand his beams,
 And sand and rock reflected back the gleams.

He waked in wonder, terror in his eyes ;
 One would have thought he would have waked in bliss,
 In wondrous ecstasy, or glad surprise !
 But no ! He dreaded something was amiss.
 His wondrous vision had not made him wise—
 Nor his philosophy prepared for this—
 That mystic spell, for which he sinned and wrought,
 Seemed far more overreaching than he thought.

He was surprised that God was in that place,
 And with his father Isaac, far off too ;
 Though he with God had spoken, face to face—
 Was also, one of but a chosen few,
 Who made profession to a God of Grace—
 A God, he could not break and shape anew—
 A great Creator, not a fetish blind,
 Like those around of human form or kind !

It seems that Jacob knew not right from wrong—
 Had not—of God—conceived a higher thought
 Than had the heathen, in his mysteries strong.
 His Lord was local. He had never sought
 THE HOLY ONE ! Whose evidences throng
 All round us. His God could be bribed or bought—
 Hid in a bush, or carried in a box,
 Invisible, till priest-craft turned the locks.

Think ! what a bargain with one's God to make !
 This man ne'er parleys but to count his gains ;
 Nor ever labours for another's sake.
 To such, a true philanthropy is vain ;
 He never gives, but ever wants to take ;
 He heeds not who may suffer want or pain—
 Remorseless as the Nemesis of fate,
 He must enforce his bond, the highest rate.

Here Jacob's mental range was stretched ; at least
 His Deity waxed greater than before :
 He had for *one whole day* been travelling east,
 And at *that distance* from his father's door—
 Behold his God ! Yon writing at the feast
 Could not have frightened famed Belshazzar more—
 Yet, when the fit of shivering left his bones,
 He poured a flask of oil upon the stones.

A foolish act, a waste of precious oil ;
 Yet pleasing his vain glory for a start.
 This sealed the gift, he kept no counterfoil ;
 Except the memory of it in his heart,
 Against the great division of the spoil ;
 When all his children would receive their part—
 This action opened up the way to fame,
 And glory, somehow gathers round his name.

That ceremony over, he proceeds
 To find his Uncle's people by the way.
 As for the acts to which that journey leads—
 Contracts, which will not bear the light of day ;
 Dishonouring plans, and questionable deeds—
 Which but to name, would overtax my lay,
 And raise my gorge. Whoe'er would trace him there,
 Will find a very full detail elsewhere.

* * * * *

105

Over that period let me draw a veil,

And interpose these asterisks, or stars ;
Denoting a desire to bridge the tale.

An easy way of vaulting over bars
Otherwise difficult to swim or scale

Without defeat ; without at least some scars—
When authors find these little things convenient,
The reader should be, just a trifle lenient.

106

Let this suffice : he found his uncle out—

Got married twice, and took two other wives,
Sans ceremonies, which means, done without—

These had no choice, in shaping their own lives ;
No wills but to obey, when charged about ;

No rights at all to independent lives—
Slaves at command, who might be bought or sold
For a few head of cattle, or some gold.

107

He had grown rich by questionable means ;

The game he played, though wicked, seemed to win ;
And with his gains he sought to leave the scenes,

And kindly friends who took the outcast in.
The story more to vice than virtue leans ;

The veil put up to screen his frauds too thin—
If read elsewhere, the reader at a glance,
Would term it an impossible romance.

He left not as he came, his dubious acts,
 Made him afraid to meet the father's eye.
 While Laban's family were on distant tracts
 Gathering their harvest, he made haste to fly ;
 Leaving no record of the damning facts,
 Which Isaac's God approved. Not God on high—
 Rise ! fellow-men, and trample in the dust,
 This slander of the Father whom we trust !

He was o'ertaken with his cumbrous train ;
 Reproached for having sneaked through Laban's gate,
 Which opened for him with a friendship fain.
 In answer, he commenced a lengthened prate,
 Quite in the injured, and offended strain ;
 And driven at last into a narrow strait—
 Confessed his haste was due to God's commands,
 And fear of chastisement from Laban's hands.

“Look on this picture, and on this” so said
 Our William Shakespeare by the Danish Prince ;
 And many a time, these pointed words have led
 To contrasts quite as great as Hamlet's, since ;
 And therefore, I insert those words, instead
 Of those I might have chosen, to convince
 All minds unbiased, in this heathen's favour ;
 Contrasted with that man-of-God's behaviour.

The heathen parent's love found triumph here.

He might have whipped the wretch ; but doing so
His daughters' honour which he held so dear,

Would thereby suffer, so he bade him go ;
Wishing them success in their chosen sphere ;

That peace would crown their lives, and love bestow
Its choicest blessing, till the yellow leaf,
Gave warning of a happiness too brief.

They parted there in peace, one to retrace

His steps for home. One hardly knowing where
The path might lead him ; or in what strange place

Evil might yet befall. His coward fear
Betrayed an inward feeling of disgrace

For wrong yet untoned. Going by Seir,
Where Esau dwelt in state ; where wealth and power
Had come to him, without his father's dower.

How could he meet him, how appease his wrath,

How gain a passage through that brother's land ;
So warped, so wronged ! how could he cross his path—

How hold to him a trembling guilty hand ;
To prove what lasting love a brother hath—

How pass before his armed and mounted band—
If Esau chose to flash along the line
An angry message, or a hostile sign.

He soon evolved a plan he thought would do ;
 Selected presents in imposing scale.
 A grand and tempting sight when spread to view,
 And sure he thought with Esau to prevail.
 Yet other issues must be reasoned too—
 What if the efforts then put forth, should fail ?
 He must succumb before an armed host,
 And all the prizes of his life be lost.

Farewell then to the riches falsely made,
 And all the greatness he had hoped to see.
 He sent his flocks across a stream ; then stayed
 Alone, to muse on freaks of destiny.
 There from his inmost, deepest depth he prayed ;
 A long, loud wail of selfish agony—
 Fear of his brother--terrors, vague and dim,
 Like phantoms of the brain encompassed him.

He wrestled in the horror of despair
 With one he deemed an angel in disguise ;
 Common to eastern climes, but very rare
 In modern life, or under western skies ;
 Unless where fever's reign, or mad nightmare
 May summon such before our frenzied eyes—
 Born of the darkness, dawn dispels the trance,
 Chasing it to the region of Romance.

On parting with the oracle, he went

Forward to meet his brother ; bowing lowly
As ever slave before a conqueror bent—

For seven successive times—solemn and slowly ;
Like envoy on momentous mission sent

To plead with Lámá, or Mikado holy—
The tables then were turned, the mischief breeder
Had thus become a very special pleader.

“The quality of mercy—is twice blessed.”

The shaft is borrowed, and you know the quiver
Whence 'tis selected, as it suited best.

Small rills make up the brook, and brooks the river
Which first go from, then to the ocean's breast.

So do ideas from the great Thought-Giver—
Poor man is but the means through which they flow
To guide the progress of his kind below.

Time had not left deep marks on Esau's brow ;

His form was strait and stalwart as of yore,
And notwithstanding prophecy and vow ;

He re-appears quite rich in worldly store.
His first great service he would render now ;

That of forgiveness—God-like long before
The lips of Jesus Christ, our elder brother
Uttered the precept : “Love ye one another !”

Despite youth's follies, he had lived to learn
 That blessings were but words, sincerely spoken,
 And sweet to memory—every man must earn
 His own reward, the most substantial token
 Of faithful labours. Rest, for which all yearn,
 Is best self-won ; e'en promises get broken
 Without their maker's blame—like toys that please,
 Till life finds wants for sterner things than these.

Esau had never bowed to any man,
 Nor served one as his father said he must ;
 The two had lived apart, since Jacob ran
 From vengeance, some would have considered just.
 Esau was powerful, and beyond the ban,
 Or the command of him who touched the dust—
 Had ever Vice and Virtue more their due
 Before high heaven, than now, between these two!

How often are our fore-casts boding ill?
 And those of Jacob's point the moral well ;
 He felt afraid his brother might fulfil
 His first intention ; but the surging swell
 Of inward, burning fires had long been still,
 And all past wrongs forgiven ; he ran and fell
 On Jacob's neck. The better angel kept
 The lamp of love alight, and lo ! they wept.

Esau had passed the shepherds with their gifts
 And questioned Jacob what the show might mean,
 "For you my Lord!" as humbly, he uplifts
 His eyes, "If such as I may deign
 To crave acceptance." To what servile shifts
 A man must sink who would on virtue lean
 As on a crutch; or fancies he can buy
 Love and esteem with gold, or with a lie.

"I have enough my brother, and to spare,
 And wherefore should I take these gifts from you;
 But whence all thsoe whom you have gathered there?"
 "My wives and children, 'tis for these I sue!
 Since God has given them for my special care,
 I ask thy favours far beyond my due;
 And since thou hast been pleased to spare the rod,
 I look upon thy face as that of God!"

Thus he prevailed on Esau to receive
 His gifts, and end the dreaded meeting;
 Suspicious still, appearance might deceive,
 Despite the undeserved and cordial greeting.
 Esau so far, had no desire to leave,
 Offering to guard him all the way, repeating
 Anew the pledges of a fond affection,
 Love for hate, and brotherly protection.

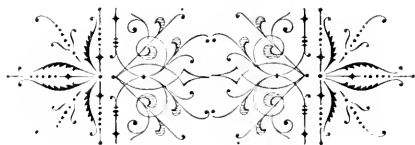
The escort was rejected, 'twas inferred
 From what he said, he wished to go alone ;
 If there were foes before him, he preferred
 To face the dangers unseen and unknown,
 Than those he fancied might have interfered
 With that prerogative he deemed his own—
 Thus from quite different motives friends may sever,
 And lives which should have blended, part forever.

“ My task is finished, I have said my say !
 I have attempted here to paint each brother,
 As they might strike a stranger by the way.
 I might as well at this time as some other,
 Drag out this story to the light of day
 To treat it, simply as we would another—
 Should they be sanctified, and fenced about ;
 Our sins laid bare, and theirs all blotted out ? ”

“ I have been frank, while some may think me bold ;
 I've spoken freely on a sacred theme,
 And some may wish to spurn me from the fold,
 Or sting my soul with scorn, thus stem the stream
 Within its flood-gates ; freeze with cold
 A heart which seeks to rouse them from a dream—
 To tear God's mandate from a deed most foul,
 Regardless of the priestly ban or scowl.”

"Take not my statement, scan the Scripture page,
 And judge if I the record truly trace ;
 I do not here against the heathen rage,
 Or bate my reverence for the throne of Grace ;
 I do not claim the functions of the sage :
 Nor of the seer, who pierces time and space—
 I seek to use my lowly heaven-sent powers
 In love for God, for man, for birds and flowers."

"I seek not to destroy a tithe of good,
 But take my stand by those who sift the dross ;
 Make good and evil better understood—
 Weigh in the balance all the gain and loss ;
 Glean from all climes imperishable food,
 And point humanity to Calvary's Cross—
 Where Christ by savage hordes led forth to die,
 Drew all men heaven-ward in his agony



M Y B O Y .

To D——, on completing his Thirteenth year.

Boyhood, with its dream-like fancies,
 You will leave behind you soon,
For the higher souled romances,
 We inhale at manhood's noon.

School-time, with its tasks and sorrows,
 Interlaced with brightest gleams ;
Ere the flight of many morrows,
 Shall be only memory's themes.

Need I say ? your baby prattle
 Sounded sweetly in our ears ;
Need I now rehearse the battle ?
 Fought for home through all those years.

Not the wealth of worldlings prizing ;
 Not for greed, nor grand display ;
But to help our loved ones rising
 O'er the bars which blocked our way.

All the steeps we have not mounted ;
 Backward steps make progress slow ;
 What is gained is easy counted—
 What it cost you ne'er can know.

Follow now the impulse given,
 Aiming at a farther height ;
 Watchful, that you be not driven
 Backward in the gloom of night.

Spur each nerve of healthy being
 Raise your standard—up and on,
 Till, within your range of seeing,
 Looms the goal which should be won.

Fame is not a prize to sigh for ;
 Zeal for SELF corrupts our good ;
 Never soil your soul to try for
 That which blots the rectitude.

Riches open many places,
 Closed to worth and great renown ;
 If wealth waits on your embraces,
 Wear, and share the golden crown.

Waste not time in vain, caressing
 Friends that smile in shine and calm ;
 Find out where life's cross is pressing,
 Wash the wounds, and spread your balm.

Life is not a round of singing—

 Anthem, song, and roundelay ;

Music bells in chorus ringing

 Till it ends like Summer day.

No year brings unbroken pleasure,

 Sorrow meets us anywhere ;

Give to every mood its measure,

 Never yielding to despair.

Luring forms of dark temptation,

 May entrap you unawares ;

Shun its fatal fascination ;

 Shun the wily trapper's snares.

Vice with outspread arms may seize you,

 But, be resolute my son

When the syren tries to please you,

 And the vict'ry will be won.

All our failings you inherit—

 All our better parts are yours ;

Strive to follow where there's merit,

 Nothing but the Good endures.

As the years roll, wisdom gather,

 Nurse no idle sickly fear ;

Trust the Living, Loving FATHER,

 HE will guide, and HE will cheer.

“A RAININ’ STREET.”

A WEE LASSIE’S YAUMER.

‘I dinna like on a rainin’ street!’
 This was the plaint o’ a wee, wee maid;
 Thae were the very words she said
 Ae afternoon o’ a Spring gane by;
 When the birds were liftin’ their hearts to the sky—
 When specs o’ blue
 Were keekin’ through,
 Cheerin’ the hearts o’ the leal an’ true.

Labour was hush’d, an’ the croods were gane
 To the sandy shore or the kintra lane,
 While some in the clearer holiday air,
 Saunter’d at will thro’ the street or square—
 Some socht the side
 O’ the busy Clyde,
 Whaur the mickle ships in their stately pride,
 Were tether’d, or ploughin’ the mirky tide.

A walk wi’ wee bairns gi’es little joy
 To hearts unblest wi’ wee lassie or boy;
 The en’less questions the glib tongues ply,
 Are wearisome tattle they’d fain slip by;

Their manifold wants, are like rackin' pains,
 Their possession at best are but dootfu' gains—

But the love that bides,
 Whate'er betides,
 An' the strength that shiel's
 In the hame or fiel's,

Tho' tired an' sair, as the day wears dune,
 Can smile on a bairn like the Lord abune,
 An' keep a saft word for a steerin' ane.

O' celestial movements I daurna speak,
 Tho' the Sun a' day played at hide-an-seek,
 Ae meenint, its glory oor sicht wad strain,
 The next left nae trace o' the shinin' train ;
 Syne the silver gray took a darker hue,
 An' a drookin' rain cam' lashin' thro,
 Ratlin' on bonnets an' cloaks, an' hoods,
 Draiglin' the brows o' the holiday croods ;
 Here-awa' there-awa' flew in despair,
 A' that had something that wadna repair—

Then it cam' to pass
 That that wee, wee lass

Got mountit up on her brither's back,
 To hurry alang on the hameward track ;

But her tears fell fast,
 As they hurried past,

An' her cries were heard ower the getherin' blast ;
 Ower the patterin' rain, an' the clatterin' feet,
 As she leuell'd her grief at the rainin' street.

But slowly we move wi' a burden alang,
 When oor ears are dimm'd wi' a greetin' sang,
 It 's a wearisome plod, be't nae great length,
 A trial to temper, an' tryin' to strength.
 Wi' the greetin' bairnie the boy trudged on,
 Without a groan ;
 Tryin' his best to get oot o' the Weet ;
 Oot o' the sicht o' the rainin' street.

"I dinna like on a rainin' street."
 This was the plaint o' the wee, wee maid ;
 Thae were the words that she sang an' said.

Wi' us grown up bairns it is much the same,
 The blameless, we're often gi'en to blame ;
 An' we canna say the mood comes in spells,
 For it's unco seldom we blame oorsels.
 We quarr'l wi' the issues o' time an' sense,
 E'en the dispensations o' providence.
 Whatever happens, we've aye been richt ;
 When oor een grows dim we cry for licht—
 When troubles come wi' oor thrawart ways,
 A' things ha'e changed since oor by-gane days.
 We a' wad reap whaur we haena sawn,
 An' gether the roses before they're blawn—
 Jist like the bit bairn, we whine an' greet,
 An' wish we were aff o' the rainin' street.

"GO SWEET FLOWER."

Go sweet flower ! with hearty greeting,
Friendship's oldest thoughts repeating ;
Fill with joy, hearts true and tender,
With remembrance of the sender.

Silently the years steal o'er us ;
Bright gleams light the path before us ;
Troubles fly when hearts draw nearer,
Life grows sweeter, Love grows dearer.

Earth is clouded o'er with sorrow !
Let us from life's store-house borrow,
Wealth of Nature's laughing glances,
So to stir our brighter fancies.

Life is short ! to make it longer,
Knit the bonds of love still stronger ;
Let each day in fullest measure,
Fill its record with pure pleasure.

And, when ends this changeful lay—
When Earth's music dies away ;
Pass not gloomy through its portal,
Cheer the PATH to LIFE IMMORTAL.

A BIRTHDAY WISH.

I wish thee joy to-day !
 And to thy journey's end ;
 May Love and Peace go hand-in-hand.
 And Wisdom prove thy friend
 These be thy guides from day to day,
 And carkling Care shall flee away.

Bright may thy future be ;
 But not as cloudless day—
 A life, which blends both shade and shine,
 Is that for which I pray—
 No cross of grief too much to bear,
 No dazzling crown too bright to wear.

Why wish what cannot be ?
 Why build a false ideal ?
 Time all our weaknesses will try,
 And show us what is real—
 All wrong, all falsehood then with-stand,
 And thou shalt sit at God's Right Hand.

“S O M E D A Y, S O O N.”

“Some day, soon!” yes, “Some day, soon!”
These were the words our darling said,
On one of the early days of June,
As the sunbeams gilded the sick child’s bed.
We had moved from the city’s crowded streets,
To a quieter home, with the fields close by;
Where the purer air, with its countless sweets,
Might bring light back to her languid eye.

All for her! yes, all for her
That change was made, though it came too late;
Unseen, unheard, mid the ceaseless stir,
A hand was weaving the web of fate—
She seemed so much better a year ago,
We thought to baffle the sage of gloom;
And brought her safe through the frost and snow,
Into the season of leaf and bloom.

Must it be ! oh, must it be !
 We cried in our bitterness again ;
 Why ? why so blind, that we failed to see
 The hand of death was there, even then ?
 Thus we whispered hope to our child so dear ;
 We promised to carry her in our arms,
 Out, where the notes of the song-birds cheer—
 Out, where the flowers and the grass work charms.

“Some day, soon !” yes, “Some day, soon !”
 Sweet, sweet was the balm those words conveyed ;
 They silenced our grief that afternoon,
 Like a gleam of hope from a deep, dark shade.
 We guessed not then, what her words *might* mean ;
 So simple, so easy to understand—
 We did not picture a far-off scene,
 On the unknown shores of the spirit-land.

All too soon ! oh, all too soon !
 Clay-cold—and silent—and free from pain—
 We *carried her out* in the afternoon,
 As the Sun was hid in a cloud of rain.
 For that last journey, she could not know
 She was closely veiled, and thinly dressed ;
 Or that lillies—white as the purest snow,
 Lay in soft beauty above her breast.

Some day soon ! yes, some day soon !
 We too shall go when we know it not ;
 Wherever in space, our souls commune,
 'Twill be heaven indeed, that hallowed spot.
 Meantime, we'll treasure the faint, sweet smile
 Which shone on her face at our last farewell,
 As a God-given sign, to reconcile
 Our hearts to the hope that all is well.



THROUGH THE "VALLEY."

~~~~~  
 WEE POLLY, AGED 5 YEARS.  
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Why should we cry aloud in our despair ?
 Passing the door of that deserted room,
 Our darling languishes no longer there,
 Her spirit crushed beneath a pall of gloom ;
 No longer slumbers fitfully in pain ;
 No, ne'er again.

Her weary head has found a place of rest
 Beyond the busy city's ceaseless sound ;
 With pure white lillies lying on her breast,
 She sweetly smiles in that dark underground,
 And flowers are blowing while the weary sleep,
 And mourners weep.

Why should such partings come when love is strong?

The trust so holy, the communion sweet,

Why can we shield from deeds of human wrong?

Yet grant to Death a vengeance so complete,

Why to that tyrant bow? and kiss his rod,

As th' hand of God.

Our race is old in years; in wisdom young;

We have not learned as yet ourselves to know:

We glibly theorize with pen or tongue,

On human life, its problems—weal and woe—

Yet on the nature of the life to come;

The wise are dumb.

Somewhere there is a goal, somewhere a source,

Though mystery shrouds our advent and our end,

The God we worship is above mere force—

Higher than mind of man can comprehend;

Who through the mazes of all deed and thought,

Forgets us not.

When worn and shattered in this ceaseless strife,

We leave this being with our wills resigned;

The ties which give the sweetest charms to life,

Are rudely sundered, and the weary mind

Dreams of new glories on the mist-veiled shore;

God keeps in store.

Age brings decay, but the destroyer, Death,
 Rests not content, to reap a harvest there ;
 O'er our loved young, he blows his blighting breath,
 Nor rosy, dimpled childhood deigns to spare—
 Do angels covet all the prettiest flowers?
 We claim as ours.

Or would earth's contact so deface these gems,
 Through lack of strength in trial's darkest hour?
 That heavenly love, life's tiny channel stems,
 Bearing them safe beyond the tempter's power ;
 We guess, but answer not, and leave the rest,
 As God sees best.

Yet, while the wound is fresh, the aching heart
 Feels that such wisdom is so hard to see ;
 We think sweet bonds should not be torn apart,
 Even for the promised joys that are to be—
 We love so much this life, and borderland,
 On which we stand.

Our *Here*, is called the birth of the *Hereafter*—
 A sound of fury, or a terror dumb ;
 An oscillation between grief and laughter—
 A foretaste of the bliss or woe to come ;
 Our world is likened to a stepping stone,
 To worlds unknown.

But all beyond seems dark, those little feet
 That shunned small obstacles as mountain bars ;
 That stumbled o'er the floor, or on the street,
 Have now to mount to worlds beyond the stars ;
 The finite in infinity, though blind,
 The way shall find.

Our child went not through tortuous paths alone ;
 God does not leave his tender ones to grope
 Their way through gloom. He guides from zone to zone,
 The crowds that throng the vale and mount the slope,
 Till at the summit, where His doors stand wide,
 Through which all glide.

Our little darling had her singing days,
 And sang the Lord her Shepherd's loving care,
 This seemed the favourite, of her many lays—
 Her hymn of praise—she felt no need for prayer,
 Her wants were few ; her parents humble store ;
 Met all—and more.

Though brief at prayer, her heart was full of praise,
 She warbled all her lyrics while she played ;
 Sweet, artless, full of childhoods winning ways,
 Oh ! how we miss that little voice. It made
 Our toil less wearisome, the place less drear ;
 O voice of cheer !

At home, at work, we miss her, and elsewhere !
 Yet try to bear it bravely, as through tears
 We look afar among those worlds in air ;
 And wonder whether days, or months, or years
 Shall pass, before we hear that mystic call,
 Which comes to all.

We shall be ready when the message comes,
 The readier that our sainted child is there ;
 No need for trumpet call, or roll of drums ;
 Attendent hosts, or heralds to prepare—
 Our little maid shall guide and escort be,
 O God ! to thee.



MY DARLING'S GRAVE.

I sought my darling's grave one day,
 Before the advent of the snow ;
 The grass was green as in the May,
 The flowers had scarcely ceased to blow.
 I stooped to pull a flower or leaf,
 To treasure in the coming years ;
 But in the blindness of my grief,
 I could not see to choose for tears.

I went because I loved to go,
 And not to nurse despondent fears ;
 I loved that little sufferer so—
 I love the brown and green she wears.
 Ah ! tell me not *She* lies not there,
 That knowledge gives no clearer view ;
 She lives ! I know she lives elsewhere,
 And wait in faith to find that true.

What we embraced, is hid from view ;
 The fondled hands, the nestling head
 Shall there dissolve, and with the dew
 Shall filter through that pebbly bed.
 Though that decays which wrapped the soul,
 Immortal love survives to cheer,
 And, influenced by the past control,
 May not her spirit hover near ?

And in some thoughtful earth-ward flight,
 A brief, bright glimpse I yet may see—
 Transfigured, in her robes of light —
 To shew the higher Life to me.
 Too high the wish ; too fond the hope—
 That may not be, which hath not been ;
 Through human ways we all must grope,
 And climb the heights which intervene.

And yet, when on life's wavering line,
 With but a filmy thread between ;
 'Tis said, sometimes a flash divine,
 Illumes the life beyond this scene ;
 So, standing o'er my darling's grave,
 I try to bridge the tangled years—
 See her grown beautiful and brave,
 Removed from all that blights or wears.

* * * * *

I sought my darling's grave again—
 The fields with ice were crusted o'er,
 The furrowed ridges marked the plain,
 Like breakers, frozen on the shore.
 Each stem, each stone was robed in white,
 As if a myriad hands had been
 Weaving in webs the dews of night,
 To drape them with a glittering screen.

Was Nature dead, or seeming so ?
 I marvelled on its slumbering powers ;
 In haste to see the green below,
 I brushed the hoar-frost from the flowers :
 My touch unveiled the dormant life ;
 Revealed the perfect living forms,
 Which brave the elemental strife,
 And bloom again beyond the storms.

Not so our human flowers below ;
 Once blanched, their lips shall bloom no more ;
 The germs in brighter spheres may grow
 To lovelier shapes than worn before ;
 But no spring breeze, nor summer heat
 Can pierce that thick brown covering through,
 To touch the heart, revive its beat ;
 Or give the cheeks their rosy hue.

No ! no, the seasons pace their round,
 Earth's verdure goes, and comes again ;
 But here, no more shall ours be found ?
 For our lost loves our search is vain ?
 Lost Loves ! Why Lost ? Oh doubting heart,
 Can Love be lost if God is Love ?
 Days, months or years, we live apart,
 Sometime—Somewhere, to meet above.



“SIDE BY SIDE.”

Side by side, along the green lanes roaming
 In friendly talk ;
 Watching the shadows of descending gloaming
 O'er-arch our walk.

Hand in hand, beside thy parents' dwelling,
 Looking above;
 Feeling a mystic power within us swelling—
 Learning to love.

Arm in arm, when bright the moon is shining,
 And all is still;
 Closer and closer every day inclining,
 In heart and will.

Heart with heart, beside a calm stream seated,
 Among sweet flowers;
 Wondering why such joy was ever meted,
 To souls like ours.

Soul with soul, into the future peering,
 With wistful eyes;
 Foreseeing lasting bliss, nor even fearing,
 Dissevered ties.

Hearts and souls, though separate, still in union,
 In memories hold;
 Waiting till time shall give more close communion—
 More bliss unfold.

LAW—FOR RICH AN' POOR.

There's a *Law* for the rich an' a *Law* for the poor,
 An' few folks o' gumption 'll doot it ;
 For siller can raise sic a glamour or stour,
 As blin's a' the bodies aboot it.

If the poor step aside frae a virtuous path,
 They get haul'd alang in a passion ;
 Whaur Justice sits sulkin' or frownin' in wrath,
 An, dealin' oot —Law—in the fashion.

When the rich over the borders o' rectitude gang,
 An' drag ithers wi' them to ruin ;
 They get threaten'd an' lectur'd on hae'en gane wrang,
 An' what they hae wreck'd wi' the brewin'.

The harangue maistly en's wi' a punishment sma',
 An' sae the wrang's legally richtit ;
 Ay richtit atweel in the sicht o' oor law,
 While the law o' the Highest is slichtit.

There may be ae law for a' kin's it is true,
 But hoo different it fares wi' *Law-Breakers* ;
 It tramps on the crood, while it winks at the few,
 Wha belang to the privileged *Law-Makers*.

S O M E D A Y .

Some day, we may think it best,
That our darling has been taken
To a couch with sweet flowers dressed,
Nevermore, on Earth to waken—
Some day, we may think it best,
She was taken first to rest.

Some day, ah ! but NOW, and HERE,
What would love not give to bring her ?
Loudest bell or clarion clear,
Cannot stir our little singer—
Warbling in another sphere—
Somewhere, if no longer here.

Some day, we may think it best ;
Drooping under more deep sorrow ;
Sighing for that blissful rest ;
Longing for a brighter morrow—
When, with keener griefs oppressed,
We may come to think it best.

Some day, with her failing powers,
 Had she lived when we were taken ;
 Who would then have cheered her hours,
 When by those most loved, forsaken —
 God, Who knoweth all things best,
 Gave our darling needful rest.



IN GOD'S KEEPING.

Safe in God's sacred keeping !
 What wish for more, or say ?
 Why nurse veiled grief, why sit we idle, weeping ?
 And murmuring at the sower's time for reaping
 As if we longed to stay ?

Those, who have sunnier hours ;
 Who never suffer wrong ;
 Who stroll through greenest glades, or fragrant bowers,
 Careless, as babbling brooks, or wayside flowers ;
 May feel their pulse-beat strong.

But, those care-worn and weary,
 Struggling for daily bread ;
 Toiling from early morn, to midnight eerie ;
 Each sunrise, ushering an outlook dreary —
 The Reaper scarce can dread.

Broken with ceaseless fighting ;
 Jaded, worn-out, and sere ;
 Bent with life's burden, vexed with thoughtless slighting,
 Waiting for rest—leaving with God, the righting
 Of wrongs inflicted here.

Forth, from earth's lowliest station,
 Into a kindlier land ;
 Sweetened with Mercy, gladdened with adoration ;
 Where LOVE—Infinite—worketh a transformation,
 Worthy the Master-Hand.

Out of this darkness, Mother !
 Through which we blindly stray
 With thy poor boy, our world-bruised, suffering brother,
 Sundered so long, now leaning on each other,
 Walking the endless way.

Round thy knees there, will gather
 Prattlers with sunny hair ;
 Who called thee mother, and my father, father !
 Those baby sisters I have never seen, or rather
 Seen but in dreamland, fair.

We all have visions holy,
 In hours of quiet thought ;
 Visions of cheer—that banish melancholy—
 That stir the heart to lofty deeds—and lowly—
 That come like God—unsought.

And fain would follow, seeking
 The path which leads above ;
 We wait and watch the dawn of morning breaking ;
 We strain to hear soft, heavenly voices speaking
 In tender tones of love.

To all, that hope is given—
 For all, that knell is rung ;
 These portals close, those sundering clouds are riven,
 Revealing glimpses of a grander heaven,
 Than prophet-bards have sung.

Not crystal rivers, flowing
 By streets of burnished gold ;
 Nor Sapphire throne, nor robes with brilliants glowing ;
 Baubles, which worldly pomp is daily showing,
 Heaven's gates may not unfold.

To meet friends gone before—
 To grasp a long lost hand—
 To hear loved tones and laughter as of yore,
 Would make a heaven of any earthly shore—
 Even of a waste of sand.

Each following on the other,
 We go as we are led ;
 Yearning to find a sister, or a brother ;
 To lay on the fond bosom of a mother,
 A tired, world-weary head.

ROBERT BURNS.

ON UNVEILING A MARBLE STATUE AT KILMARNOCK.

1879.

Sing in deathless strains our heroes ;
Crown their brows with laurel bays !
And invoke the sculptor's genius
To subscribe its marble lays.

Take the shine from classic temples,
Now their symbol'd myths have fled ;
For, instead of false ideals,
We enshrine our noble dead.

All the zeal of hero worship,
Graven on those ancient fanes,
Thrills unchecked through all the ages ;
Never tires and never wanes.

Less and less, we trill the praises
Of mere demigods of wars ;
Worth disowns the sickening favours,
Showered on pedigrees and scars.

Deeming those worth homage only,
Who have wielded sword or pen ;
To achieve their country's freedom—
To redress the wrongs of men.

Such a hero was the genius,
 Unto whom all Scotland turns,
 Now to pay a debt of honour
 To its Poet, ROBERT BURNS.

Does his fame require this marble,
 Fresco'd hall, or pillar'd pile?
 Shall his lyric splendours perish,
 While a scotchman treads this isle?

With our sires he roamed the woodlands,
 Waded streams, and climbed the hills;
 And his song, on lake or river,
 Still enchants and charms, and thrills.

How he yearned for righteous progress!
 Though he never reached his goal;
 How he spurned the thrall of fashion,
 And the creeds which warp the soul!

With a scorn for fulsome phrases,
 How he mourned neglect and wrong!
 Hated shallow, vain pretension
 To exclusive gift of song.

Could he stand to-day before us?
 Listening to the swelling hymn;
 Might not memory make him voiceless?
 Might not tears his vision dim?

Crowd our halls with busts of heroes,
 Read their lessons through the years ;
 Fill not other's cups with bitters,
 While we deck those sacred biers.

Help his prophecy's fulfilment !
 Deeds for words shall let us see,
 All the fulness of the sunrise,
 All the Brotherhood to be.



CYNICAL VERSES.

NOT SO CYNICAL AS THEY SEEM.

Trill out a deathless lay !
 Sweet, sweet as the song of bird—
 Piping aloud in the month of May—
 But, never an angry word.

Sing out in trumpet tone,
 Truth, Right, and the shame of Wrong !
 And soon you'll pace life's verge alone,
 In imagination strong.

Live on the air, poor bard !
 And scorn this material show ;
 Refuse all semblance of reward,
 From the crowds which throng below.

Sing down those powers that grind
 The toilers, in far off States ;
 But, for your own dear sake, be blind
 To the wrongs within your gates.

Sing worthy means and ends !
 Pour out wrath on trusts betrayed !
 But ne'er portray the faults of friends,
 Or with stripes you shall be paid.

Sing love to those around ;
 So that peace may crown your days !
 But hush at once the faintest sound
 That might close the lips of praise.

Sing near themes always fair !
 Things distant sing as you please ;
 Your burdens shall be light to bear ;
 Your life be a life of ease.

To praise, brings larger trust,
 And the flatterer wins renown ;
 But the fault-finder's inglorious dust,
 Dishonoured shall go down.

SCOTLAND.

Oh this love ! this love of country !
How shall words its depth convey ;
Paint the sickness and the yearning,
When the heart pines far away.

Scotia, Scotia ! oft with raptures
Have thy songs entranced the ear,
And thy daughter's sweetest singing,
Has made memories doubly dear.

There are lands, so vast and boundless,
Where thy streams would seem but rills ;
And thy mountains, knolls or knotches,
On the bosoms of their hills.

They have lakes, near which, Loch Lomond
Might appear a paltry pool ;
Inland seas, in which our Island
Might be plunged, and not be full.

They have valleys—spacious gardens,
Bearing corn and fruit, and flowers.
In such store, as tempt the toilers
From this northern clime of ours.

Yet wherever fortune leads them—
 Whether east, or westwards whirled ;
 All their thoughts of glory centre
 In this corner of the world.

While surveying heights of wonder,
 Scotia's hills in heath arrayed,
 Rise and fill the patriot's vision,
 As the loveliest, God hath made.

Fairer, dearer than all others,
 Oft with absence fonder grown,
 Hallowed by past deeds of glory,
 Loved, because they are their own.

O this love for one's own country,
 Gives contentment, though in chains ;
 While the exile frets forever,
 Where no salve can soothe his pains.



“BABY HELEN.”

What have you come here to do,
 Baby Helen ?
 Cry, and smile, and coo, coo, coo,
 Baby Helen !

Coached in all the guileless arts,
 Armed to storm our softer parts ;
 Win, and keep our human hearts—

Baby Helen.

Fancy follows all your smiles,

Baby Helen !

Visions of bright, far-off isles,

Baby Helen !

Raptures, language fails to paint,

Flood our souls without constraint ;

Spotless cherub, virgin saint—

Baby Helen !

Have you come, pink hands and face ?

Baby Helen !

Just to fill your sister's place—

Baby Helen !

Did she meet you, passing through

Spirit realms, for pastures new ?

Claiming closest kin with you :

Baby Helen ?

Here, she 'd been so glad to know you,

Baby Helen !

O ! so proud, her toys to show you,

Baby Helen !

Constant as a little mother,
 Polly worshipped baby brother ;
 Love in store to bless another—
 Baby Helen.

She's with angels—with us stay,
 Baby Helen !
 We shall prize you more than they,
 Baby Helen !
 We shall guide and guard your way ;
 Watch you through the night and day,
 Lest your little feet might stray—
 Baby Helen !

Welcome, for the love you wake,
 Baby Helen !
 Welcome, for your own, sweet sake,
 Baby Helen !
 Welcome to this changeful life ;
 One more blessing in the strife ;
 Chubby, blooming little wife—
 Baby Helen !



ANITHER BAIRN.

Anither Bairn ! anither cudlin' doo
 Has come to mak' its hame amang us noo :
 Anither joy to bless us in the strife,
 A new inducement in the fecht for life.

We're countin' in the hin'maist-hauf o' twelve,
 An' no a han' for its ainsel can delve,
 Or pick its lane if we were ta'en awa'
 To sleep aneath the mools. Atween us twa'
 Wee wife, I'm thinkin' noo, as far we've gane,
 We've managed won'erfu' wi' ilka wean—
 But soon we'll hae an extra plate to fill,
 When this wee lass gets on the teethin' mill.
 I'se warrant, then ye'll need your wits and skill,
 To share the parritch roun' without a spill.
 I'm in real earnest min', ye needna glower,
 Ae han'fu' mair 'll rin that goblet ower.

That's true atweel, there is a cure for that,
 'Gae to the toon an buy anither pat.'
 My conscience ! what a way that is to talk ;
 Raise up the roof, put up anither bawk.
 That maun come tae, alang wi' extra pieces,
 If at this rate, oor winsome flock increases.

We've got eneuch, guidwife for a' that's cam',
 An' we hae strength to work for this wee lamb ;
 Wha kens the blessin's, time may hae in store,
 When weak wi' age, oor han's can work no more.
 Thae han's that's helpless noo, may fill oor place,
 E'en minister to a' oor wants wi' grace ;
 May soothe declinin' years, an' bring a calm
 Frae frets an' cares, like Gilead's sacred balm.

Anither bairn ! anither bonnie doo ;
 Anither cooin', crawin', smilin' mou !
 Red han's, red face, red as a rose a' ower ;
 Twa supple limbs ca'd legs, twa een that glower—
 A curlin' tongue 'tween lips that seem to say :
 Whatever comes my gate, maun something pay—
 Twa neives that often hits its face a bang,
 Whilk dune by ither han's wad raise a sang.

May heaven that sen's the birdies an' the flowers,
 The warmth to ripen after growin' showers ;
 Sen' doon—beside its blessin' wi' the wean—
 Wisdom to guide thro' pleasure, or thro' pain ;
 The strength to help her till that riper time,
 When able for hersel the braes to climb—
 Set on the road an ever shinin' licht,
 That oot o' a' the turns, she'll tak' the richt.

Meanwhile, be't oors, guidwife to help the bairn,
 Tho' sweet, saft smiles be a' we're like to earn ;

Thae gie a joy the bairnless dinna feel,
 An' cheer us up the hills we've yet to spiel.
 Cares come to a', an' whiles we think they're blest,
 That ha'e nae yaumerin birds to file their nest ;
 When—could we measure a' that jars an' wears,
 An' plaits the wrinkles, whiles in early years—
 We 'd learn that they whase hearts an' hames were fou,
 Were the maist thankfu' an' had least to rue.

Sae, walcome mang the lave, oor brent-new bairn ;
 An' share wi' them whatever love can earn ;
 Oor fare is hamely, an' oor bield is sma',
 An' no a stane o't is oor ain ava ;
 But that which siller canna buy is oors,
 An' a' we baith can gie o't, shall be yours.



CROSSED THE BOURNE.

G. R.

Crossed the bourne, Death's dark mysterious river,
 To closer union with the great life-giver ;
 Thy task soon done, Earth's garments cast for ever.

One of our choicest, therefore soonest taken ;
 Gone ere thy prime, thy pictured course forsaken,
 And thy fond trust in heaven's grand truths unshaken.

Not given to boisterous mirth, nor melancholy ;
Simple and Christ-like, faithful, loving, lowly—
Claiming the bliss that waits the pure and holy.

Not heedless of the laurels men were earning ;
Nor scorning those for worldly comforts yearning—
Life was from God, His knowledge worth the learning.

His fair creation did not seem a blunder,
Its general beauty marred by rending thunder ;
Nor robed in green to hide our manhood under.

The flower, the leaf declared their highest meaning ;
Each unto each in close dependence leaning,
And well repaid the ardent student's gleanings.

Thy faith was simple, worshipping sincerely—
Praying for light to see God's purpose clearly ;
And in the struggle, judging self severely.

Though loving all things, not averse to leaving ;
Sure of a glorious home and glad receiving,
And final union with thy friends, left grieving.

Not over strong, hard work and close confining—
The storms and mists of city life, combining,
Waged war with thee and hastened thy declining.

Storms have no longer any power to shake thee,
 Music to cheer, voices to soothe or wake thee ;
 Since the loved Father deem'd it fit to take thee.

From these surroundings which invoke our wonder ;
 From comrades, and the friendships closer, fonder,
 To the unending life that waits us—yonder.



“ I’M A STRANGER NOW.”

“ *All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.*”—*Lamb.*

I’m a stranger now in my native town,
 Though less than a score of summers have flown
 Since, knowing and known, I traversed its streets,
 Or strolled with companions the vernal retreats.

All the highways and byeways I love to trace,
 And stand as before at each halting place ;
 But, the faces I see, and the voices I hear,
 Are strange to my vision, and strange to my ear.

Has my sight grown dim ? that I fail to see
 The friends of the past, only changed like me ?
 Ah no ! some have gone from the beaten track,
 Whence no spell of a wizard can conjure back.

A few sleep near by, in a narrow bed,
 While others the streets of far cities tread ;
 And many approaching life's midway then,
 Are—*reverend*—ladies and gentlemen.

Ev'n the nursling babes of my youthful prime
 Are now in the height of their courting time ;
 And the boy and girl of the scholar's age,
 Is a bearded man, or a matron sage.

The young men and maidens then out of their teens
 Now reign over households as kings or queens ;
 While some of the earlier married pairs,
 Recline in the shades of their—*promising heirs*.

Need I wonder then, as I sweep the range
 Of those vanished years, that I feel so strange ?
 When half the crowd of that holiday morn,
 A score of years ago, was not born.

Ev'n the friends still known, that I fain would meet,
 Have cares which deny them the busy street ;
 Such as our fathers and mothers had then,
 When we were the growing women and men.

Many favourite haunts I still can trace ;
 But the groups are changed at each halting place ;
 And their faces call up memories dear,
 As I visit the old place, year by year.

“TWENTY YEARS AFTER THIS.”

Twenty years after this ! ah, who can tell ?
 Shall we be soured or saddened, sick or well ?
 It seems so far to look before, I wis—

Twenty years after this !

Twenty years after, shall we then look back
 With pleasure, or with pain along the track !
 Brood o'er lost hopes, or bask in well earned bliss—

Twenty years after this ?

Shall we have risen above all groundless fears ?
 Pinched means, uncertainties of early years ?
 Or poor and friendless, present comforts miss—

Twenty years after this ?

Twenty years after, we shall not be old ;
 With love surviving, all shall not be cold ;
 There may be sweetness in the clasp and kiss—

Twenty years after this !

We may be feeble, lingering at the gate,
 Or passed beyond into a future state,
 And all forgiven, which we have done amiss—

Twenty years after this !

THE WEAVER'S FLIGHT.

A SEARCH FOR FOOLS.

(Said to be Founded on Fact).

Come Muse, and weave a simple rhyme.
An incident of modern time
Just strikes my fancy, and I fain
Would climb Parnassan heights again.

Lend me a steed, and let us skip
Without the aid of spur or whip,
Bound o'er the course, before the day
Has settled into twilight gray,
And let us note while hurrying by :
The verdant mead, and glowing sky,
The vagaries of great or small,
In lowly hut or lordly hall;
Then spin a tale of homely lore,
In lighter vein than heretofore.

Within a house of one small room,
A weaver plied his creaking loom,
And though it clicked till evening's fall,
His means were strait and pinched withal.
He laboured side by side with care,
And felt its kinship everywhere ;

Work with whatever will he would,
 That phantom grim, beside him stood,
 And would not budge. He tried in vain
 To shunt it forth, his small domain.

He had, like many more in life,
 A thriftless, unaspiring wife ;
 Who, void herself of high desire,
 Would trample down ambition's fire.
 While he exerted might and main,
 She slept and yawned and slept again ;
 And this went on from day to day,
 No matter what her lord might say,
 Or rather long ago had said,
 Before he deemed all hope had fled ;
 Ere the bright gates of Eden's bowers
 Had closed on him, and hid the flowers.

One morn, the sunbeams, rosy red,
 Cheered the lone toiler. Still in bed,
 His spouse unconscious of Sol's charms,
 Reposed in drowsy Morpheus' arms.
 Back and forth the shuttle flew,
 Rich in tints the pattern grew,
 Inch by inch went round the beam
 With click on click ; until a scream
 Aroused him from his working dream.
 That moment, why, he never knew ;
 Beyond its bounds the shuttle flew,
 And winged with force, it did not fall

Till it had reached the cottage wall.
 But, as across the room it sped,
 It grazed his loving spouse's head ;
 Rousing her from her after sleep,
 In wrathful ire, to scold and weep.

Such thoughtless creatures, from the first—
 For draughts of Nectar never thirst ;
 Though not averse to life's good things,
 If providence the blessing brings.
 Boorish, they wallow in the mire ;
 Of husks and dirt they never tire.
 Labour, by sweat of brow or brain,
 They could not bear for richest gain ;
 They take large shares at nature's feast,
 And giving, give what troubles least ;
 Yet strange to say this shiftless crew,
 In life's proplexities pull through,
 When higher mortals fail to do.

They fondly cling to life and time,
 Give no deep thought to themes sublime ;
 Though quick and ready, old and young,
 With canting phrases on the tongue.
 This mixture of the sage and fool,
 Was no exception to the rule ;
 Though every limb was safe and sound,
 Her terror knew no mete or bound ;
 And in the fever of her fright,
 She hurled her venom'd darts with might.

She really shrieked in her despair,
 And, though she had not lost a hair ;
 She charged him—in her frenzied strife
 With base designs against her life.

However, as through life you wend,
 All roads must take a turn, or end,
 Aye even storms—when sources fail—
 Must sober down to sickly wail,
 And in the case before us now,
 It ended in a weak—how-wow.

As if unconscious of the gale,
 Which raged on such a mighty scale ;
 Our weaver, mid these shafts of doom,
 Plied unconcerned, his ancient loom.
 He feigned at least to seem unmoved,
 And never once his wife reproved.
 Such tempests oft assailed his ears,
 They grew in volume with the years ;
 Now, as before, when choice words failed,
 She gave a dreadful lurch, and wailed,
 Her motions, like a ship's distressed
 Upon the ocean's stormy breast.

The end long threatened, came at last ;
 Our hero broken by the blast,
 And fretting from his inward scars,
 Resolved at last to burst the bars ;
 To leave his hearth, whence love had flown ;
 Where peace might never more be known—

At least till change or absence brought
 That sense of right, no schoolmen taught.
 All he had cared for once, was lost ;
 Acquired perhaps at trifling cost,
 And he evolved a novel plan,
 As strange as ever hatched by man.
 He vowed that he would search for fools,
 Adjudged by common worldly rules ;
 And would return on finding three :
 Mad as his wife had proved to be.

He lost no time, but sallied forth,
 Inclining towards the hilly North ;
 Ere daylight waned he reached a moor,
 And halted at a lonely door,
 Where sat a couple bent and gray,
 Nearing the close of life's brief day.

Beside them, crowning sight of all,
 A *lean* cow leaned against the wall ;
 Seeming too weak to raise a hoof ;
 Yet gazing fondly at the roof—
 For miles and miles the scene was bare,
 Yet man and beast found lodgement there.

Though wretched in our hero's sight,
 He craved a shelter for the night ;
 As tired of foot, and sore of heart,
 He felt his wounds begin to smart,
 And longed to find even such a rest,
 If they would grant his meek request.

Both gave assent with cheerful smile,
And bade him tarry there awhile.

He scarce was seated, when a shout
Alarmed, and made him hurry out ;
When, such a scene as met his eye,
Might all the rhyming cult defy ;
My Muse at least, can not convey
A perfect picture in my lay,
Perched on the roof with rope in hand ;
Fixed to the cow with belt, or band,
The old man pulled with might and main
To help it up ; but all in vain,
He coaxed, and ever tighter drew,
Yet failed to hoist the head in view—
Though at the other side his wife
Exerted all the powers of life.

The shouts that reached our hero's ear,
Were cries for help, and shouts of cheer ;
The poor thin cow no tit-bits got
But grew on that exalted spot.
At times, they forced it to the top,
To feed on that luxuriant crop.
The weaver heaved a deep drawn sigh,
As in his inward, seeing eye,
His wife, with all her faults laid bare ;
Seemed wiser far beyond compare.
He scarce could boisterous mirth restrain,
When the real picture crossed his brain ;

Who would have thought such fools to find,
 • Beings so destitute of mind :
 As to adopt that stupid plan,
 Which taxed the powers of brute and man—
 Unheard-of-toil, unheard-of-pain,
 All for infinitesimal gain—
 A tuft of grass, a frugal feast,
 One might have cut and given the beast.

Next day, the land he travelled through,
 Presented prettier scenes to view ;
 The cottage homes were neat and clean ;
 The flowers were bright, the verdure green.
 A sweeter fragrance filled the air,
 That made him quite forget his care.
 Groups of bright children at their play,
 Gave gladness to the closing day ;
 But little used to travelling far,
 His limbs in pain, his thoughts at war—
 He longed to find a resting place,
 Where beamed so much of heavenly grace.

He paused before a cottage door,
 Unlike the hut across the moor ;
 Life there, he thought, a prize of worth,
 A very paradise on earth.
 He begged—if blessed with room to spare,
 To be allowed to rest him there—
 For which he would most gladly pay,
 And lie away at break of day

The inmates yielding to his prayer
 A dainty meal and couch prepare.
 "Ah me," he murmured, as he lay
 Watching the daylight fade away—
 "With such a wife and cosy home,
 I would not thus a wanderer roam—
 But, such, alas can never be ;
 Too much of bliss for such as me."

Wearied, he turned and gave a yawn,
 And slept till the approach of dawn ;
 When in the midst of dreamy joys,
 He heard a most unearthly noise ;
 That roused him from his slumbers sweet,
 And brought him, trembling, to his feet.
 To learn the cause he upwards sped,
 Entered the room above his bed—
 And lo ! the antics made him stare,
 At that most loving, worthy pair.

The wife a pair of trousers held ;
 The husband ran, and leaped, and yelled !
 And frantic, mad-like efforts tried
 To get his nether limbs inside.
 Such wild endeavours, and grimaces,
 Brought tears and laughter to their faces.
 Seeing their guest's perplexing pain,
 The lady ventured to explain—
 They just had come from Scottish Hills,
 And to conform to neighbour's wills,

Were anxious to adorn his legs,
And doff his kilts and philabegs.

The English weaver laughed outright,
At Scotty's mirth provoking plight ;
The world with fools was crammed it seemed,
Of such a crop he ne'er had dreamed.

Quite satisfied, he hied away
To greet his wife without delay ;
He soon got home, his ventures told,
And vowed in future to uphold
His dignity as lord of all
Within his humble cot or hall.

His wife acknowledging the wrong,
Resolved to curb her temper strong,
And mutually they pledged anew,
To live as man and wife should do.

* * * * *

And now with one accord they say,
"Whatever faults you find at home ;
You may find worse ones every day,
The farther you may roam,"



WITHIN THE GATES.

A DREAMLAND FANCY.

I was reading late one evening,
When the household was at rest ;
From the Works of a learned Poet,
Full of sentiment and jest.

But that syren—sleep—was powerful,
And I yielded to the wand,
As my head fell drooping backward,
And the book fell from my hand.

Soon, a pretty dreamland fancy
Lighted up the conscious soul ;
When my past unrolled before me,
Like a panoramic scroll.

Then I sailed across a river
With a quiet, flowing tide,
And when far out on the waters,
All was dark at either side.

As we silently sped onward,
Darkness shrank, or rolled away ;
And before the voyage ended,
All was clear as bright noon-day.

Bright, with neither moon nor sunlight ;
 Nor a sparkling star on high ;
 That I marvelled at the brilliance
 Of that ambient, orbless sky.

‘ This ’ my guide said, ‘ is the city
 Your world-dreamers try to paint ;
 Where, man’s soul redeemed by ransom,
 May emerge at once a saint.’

‘ Here we know not saint nor sinner,
 Every child of human birth,
 Finds the Father—full of mercy,
 Wiping out the stains of earth.’

‘ Here, for every human outcast,
 When they leave that time-bound shore,
 There are homes of love all ready,
 Where temptation lures no more.’

‘ Systems have their changing seasons ;
 Spheres shall shrink, and suns shall fade ;
 But this Light which lights the heavens ;
 Was—before those suns were made.’

‘ Ere your Earth went round its orbit ;
 Or yon space was cleft by Mars ;
 Ere the chaos was evolving
 Into planetary stars.’

‘Life was here, mature, and perfect ;
 Balmier airs than earth’s sweet spring,
 Gave those tints of fadeless beauty
 Unto every living thing.’

On we went while softly speaking,
 Tireless limb and sleepless eye,
 Paced the ever varying landscape ;
 Swept the never changing sky.

Here broad lakes, and there clear rivers
 Through delightful valleys wind ;
 Mountain rising over mountain,
 Every outline well defined.

Lovely grottos, endless vista’s,
 Blooming glories all around ;
 While a verdure, green and downy
 Seemed to mantle all the ground.

Flowers in countless form and shading
 Filled the arbours everywhere ;
 Not a blight to mar the beauty,
 Nor decay to taint the air.

No dark, lonesome roads to weary,
 Throngs by lake, or stream, or rill ;
 Music, new and yet familiar,
 In the grove or on the hill.

Every change with wonder filled me,
 Still within the borderland ;
 Passing on to inner glories,
 I was taken by the hand.

Soft, and warm—the touch was human,
 Which awoke to throbbing life ;
 So, my angel was—a woman—
 With the dearest name of—wife.



A POET'S REWARD.

A Poet once wrote a song,
 While his heart within was burning ;
 Picturing ages of shame and wrong,
 And the farce of brotherhood spurning.

Culture refused it a place,
 Men's minds were not ripe to hear it ;
 While pioneers of our lordly race,
 Would not open their hearts to cheer it.

In sorrow he laid it past,
 Till the times brought forth new censors ;
 Till the leaders of thought were recast,
 And the laws had more just dispensers.

When changes with years went round,
 And the world—he thought—might need it ;
 The faint response left an aching wound,
 For society would not read it.

Alas, for the reeling brain !
 Silenced so oft in the river ;
 Genius staggering under the strain
 Of glory departed forever.

Yet that throbbing heart lived on,
 Though gleams which formerly gladdened,
 No longer over his altar shone,
 And the gloom of poverty saddened.

And, after long years had passed,
 A critic scented the wonder ;
 And the world made confession at last,
 Neglect of the bard was a blunder.

The hall-roofs echoed his name,
 And rang with his lyrics tender ;
 And enraptured choirs—with souls aflame,
 Sang in spirited self-surrender !

The people called for the bard,
 With a grand impulsive desire ;
 They traced his remains to an old churchyard,
 But the Poet had gone—up higher .

FRIENDSHIP.

Time or distance cannot sever
Hearts which must be friends for ever ;
Thought has wings, and flowers have meanings,
To express affection's leanings—
Such I send to you to-day,
Bearing all I fain would say.

Though our hands may fail to reach ;
Still, the heart's unspoken speech,
Through the thought which prompted this,
May impart a beam of bliss :
Which through cloud or storm may shine,
Like a ray from light divine.

Take this simple, artless token
Of attachment still unbroken,
Rest assured, affection's glow
Never can grow dim below ;
Though the space between gets wider,
Hearts can bridge that great divider.

H Y M N .

AN INVOCATION !

Oh ! how we strained our eyes to worlds afar ;
Called loudly, "Lord !" as if thou wert not near ;
Were strangers, though Thy gates are held ajar ;
Our trembling hearts a prey to every fear.

But in Thy temple, this fair world of ours,
We now commune, and see thy face divine ;
Our hills and glens, to us are heavenly bowers,
Each moss-crowned stone or flower-robed turf, a shrine.

Lord, speed thy cause ! Oh, help us onward now !
We ask no golden crowns, no pomp, nor power ;
We ask no laurel wreaths to deck the brow—
But smiles of cheer from Thee when dangers lour !

Help us, oh God ! to conquer fear and doubt ;
To break the chains which have enthralled so long ;
To draw those crowds within, that stand without—
To change the wail of woe for wisdom's song.

To free Thy name from gloom, and wrong, and strife ;
From creeds that crush the thoughts that heavenward rise ;
Help us to rise to the Diviner Life,
To make the whole world o'er, a paradise.

IN ABSENCE.

However far my noontide thoughts may stray,
They hover near you at the close of day ;
Though cares harass, and dreamlike projects fail,
And throbbing sorrows crowd life's varying scale—
When twilight falls, and deepens, hand in hand
We pierce the glories of a wonderland.

Together darling, two such hearts as ours,
In life's rough ways may gather sweetest flowers,
And braid them for the brow, as children weave
Their daisy chains. We doubt not, but believe
Each lives for each, true to our spoken vow—
A rootless love could not have bloomed till now.

And ours blooms bright as in the earlier days,
Mellowing as we near our Autumn haze ;
Weak when divided, strongest when most near :
Thy grief is mine, thy smile my sign of cheer—
What matters silvering locks, or snow-white hair,
If love survives the change in outward wear.

H Y M N .

Oh, sing again the gospel song of love !
Wafted to us from distant Galilee—
Which brought to earth the bliss of heaven above ;
And taught that Truth alone, would make us free.

Sing that sweet message of those far-off days !
Which charmed the wondering thousands to the hill,
To hear the Lord who trod the common ways,
Declare the mission of his Father's will.

Oh sing of Love ! Not that wild wail of wrong,
The weird-like prophets of the desert sang ;
Nor yet the stern Crusader's battle song,
When from the plains the warlike christians sprang.

Sing Love and Peace, though thrones and empires fall !
Unfurl the banner of their Prince to-day ;
Arise, in answer to his holy call,
And throw the sword of wrath and hate away.

H Y M N.

Tune—Adeste Fideles.

Here, in this Temple worshipping sincerely ;
Through God's great Love, assured of perfect care,
Ever advancing, toiling, straining upwards—
And calling on our father, to answer our prayer.

Fondly we gather, heart and soul uplifting,
Striving to vanquish the Moloch of Fear ;
With love supplanting, gloom and doubt dispelling,
And calling on our father, to answer us here.

Always believing Truth shall be triumphant,
Though in the shadow now rejected it stands ;
Under its banner, let us marshal dauntlessly—
While calling on our Father, to strengthen our hands.

Firmly united, with one aim and purpose ;
All the most dazzling heights we yet may scale ;
Storming the forts of wrong and superstition,
Still calling on our Father, till love shall prevail.

OUR FATHER'S WILL.

Not all who cry with upturned eyes,
Lord, Lord! the heavenly courts shall fill;
Those to the higher glories rise,
Who do on earth our Father's will.

Nor all who read the learned page,
Or proudly boast superior skill;
How poor the wisdom of the sage,
Who scorns to do our Father's will.

Science may name the starry throng;
Find treasures in the rock-ribbed hill
Conquer disease, and life prolong,
Yet fail to do our Father's will.

Poets may woo the tuneful lyre;
May draw admiring crowds, and still
But minister to base desire,
And flout our Father's sacred will.

Lord, Lord! in prayer and vow may blend;
Lord, Lord! the thoughtless heart may thrill;
Till sounding phrases only, lend
Their mockeries for our Father's will.

FOR JESUS' SAKE.

Among the hosts, surrounding God's high throne,
 From other realms in space besides our own,
 Shall our more spiritual vision scan
 Beings more perfect than immortal man ;
 More reverent, and obedient to His will,
 Set higher on the shining heavenly hill—
 We would not soar with those, we choose to take
 The well worn human paths, for Jesus' sake.

O Jesus, elder brother ! How can we
 Re-pay the debt of love we owe to Thee ?
 Not till the end unfolds its wondrous tale,
 With thought and action balanced in the scale ;
 Shall we in fulness count the gain and loss,
 And sift our golden treasure from the dross—
 When, from this lethargy our souls awake
 To offer thanks to God, for Jesus' sake.

Oft tired, and worn with constant toil and care,
 For change, or rest we breathe an earnest prayer ;
 Our fond desires, ambitious hopes resign,
 To lean our poor, weak hearts on Love Divine ;
 That Peace might gently fall with soothing sway,
 Obscure, dissolve the phantoms of the day—

Inspire a trust, that with the morning's break
A day more bright shall dawn, for Jesus' sake.

We sometimes mourn, our days on earth are few,
And yet we leave behind so much to do ;
New generations in their turn bewail
Their fruitless efforts, heav'n-sent missions fail ;
Thus vain regrets fill up life's chequered page,
Increased arrears descend from age to age—
Till some great, dauntless soul resolves to make
A more determined stand, for Jesus' sake.

Thus stirred at epochs, with a fervid zeal,
Progress attends the cumbrous commonweal' ;
Our erewhile indolent, or languid race,
Moves forward, upward with a firmer pace ;
But our resolves at best are writ on clay,
Which time treads out, or water wears away—
Our leaders die, or perish at the stake,
Martyr'd for truth, for right, for Jesus' sake.

Quickly the decades, and the centuries roll,
We march but slowly to the distant goal ;
We fall and rise, descend and mount again,
Retracing steps our fathers trod in pain ;
Stumbling o'er ladders we might use as wings
To soar to higher and to holier things ;
But from this haze, like dreamers we shall wake,
And reach the summit yet, for Jesus' sake.

SCOTLAND'S HILLS OF GLORY.

Oh ! for Scotland's hills of glory ;
Bleak and barren though they be !
Sacred shrines of song and story,
There, the heart may worship free !

Fatherland of mist and mountains ;
Frowning cliff, and golden shore !
Soil-browed streams, and sparkling fountains ;
Lone, wild glens where torrents roar !

Land with homes in joy abounding—
Land of covenant and prayer—
Psalm and anthem sweetly sounding,
Bracing as the mountain air !

Cold winds blow ; but do not chill us,
Fired with ardour from the past !
Dauntless deeds of heroes thrill us,
Leaving conquests still as vast !

Conquests over pride and fashion—
Over want, and woe, and wrong ;
Over Godless rule and passion :
Over all that might makes strong !

Let us pray that we be strengthened !
 For the tasks which lie before,
 And love's bonds will soon be lengthened,
 Soon will reach from shore to shore !

Flags unfurl, make preparations ;
 Every foe shall be a friend ;
 Let us in the van of nations,
 Work to hasten this great end !

Oh ! for Scotland's hills of glory ;
 Rising stately from the sea !
 Sacred shrines of song and story ;
 Make them temples of the free !



THE OLD LOVE.

Poets oft in deathless strains,
 Sing in faith their lover's praise,
 Many mourn the cold remains
 Of those fires in after days.

Breathing yet impassioned fire,
 Let me sing a sacred name ;
 Sing the crowning of desire,
 Not the kindling of the flame.

Sing the ripening love and truth,
 While life's noon is bright and clear,
 Strong with hope as buoyant youth ;
 Heedless of the coming sere.

Now our testing years have flown,
 Time betrays the silver streak ;
 Tried affections, warmer grown,
 Though in steadier tones we speak.

Cheeks may pale and hair turn gray ,
 Gray in turn transform to white ;
 Sight grow dim, till shining day
 Seems like fast approaching night.

While those beams still shine for me,
 Like the lights along the shore ;
 Landmarks from the troubled sea—
 Life has blessings still in store.

Guardian spirit of my home,
 Sharer of its griefs and joys ;
 Hallow yet the days to come,
 With the bliss which never cloy.

And when near the promised land,
 When too frail earth's hills to climb ;
 May we journey hand in hand,
 To the home of seraphim.

“ONE IS NOT.”

A group of merry, laughing faces !
 As many pairs, provoking eyes—
 A crowd of arms, whose soft embraces,
 Proprieties despise—
 All circling round two hearts, a joyous lot,
 O'er which a shadow hovers, One is not.

At times, we fain would burst asunder
 These bands to go and seek the lost ;
 Restore her in the midst of wonder—
 Which of us marv'ling most ?
 But, every month and year the gulf grows wider.
 Thicker the shrouding veil of the divider.

'Tis measureless, the love around us ;
 And sweet the tones that greet us here ;
 And yet, of all that chain which bound us,
 The broken link was dear—
 We miss her, oh, so much, time cannot blot
 The fair, sweet picture, though the child is not.

The outline may grow somewhat dimmer,
 And time may close the gates of tears ;
 But while earth's lights before us glimmer—
 While memory counts its years,

An influence, wafted o'er that bridgeless moat,
Shall float around the home, where—she is not.

Only a warbling bird—one only
Before the noon-day sun has flown ;
But Mercy hath not left us lonely,
We many blessings own—
Yet, wand'ring often to a sacred spot,
We see the grass and flowers, but—she is not.



“WHEN THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY.”

Yield not now to crushing sorrow
Break not drooping heart to-day ;
Time shall bring a brighter morrow,
“When the shadows flee away.”

Heavily the gloom is pressing ;
Open heart and softly pray,
That the dawn shall send a blessing,
And “the shadows flee away.”

Dimpled arms so lately twining
Round thy neck in childish play,
In the grave are now reclining,
Soon, ah, soon to fade away.

“Earth to earth,” O saddening story ;
 Why this short uncertain day—
 Like the rainbow’s sudden glory,
 Suddenly to pass away.

“Earth to earth,” yet death defying,
 Crumbling not with grosser clay ;
 Spirit life to spirit flying,
 When its “shadows flee away.”

Cease sore heart, oh cease thy weeping,
 Forms transformed shall round thee play ;
 God shall give them to thy keeping,
 “When the shadows flee away.”



A S O N G O F P R O G R E S S.

When our first parents’ wondering eyes
 Surveyed their flowery, sunlit home ;
 What joy was theirs ! but what surprise,
 When night unrolled its spangled dome.

When far as human eye could see,
 A bridge of stars bent o’er the plain ;
 Pale moonbeams silvered flower and tree,
 And lit the murmuring streams again.

Those dawns, those sunsets still go round,
 With awe we gaze on sun and star ;
 The earth we tread is mystic ground,
 Still deeper mysteries veiled afar.

Not always light, nor always shade ;
 Not endless plain, nor boundless sea ;
 The myriad forms which Thou hast made,
 Are full of glory, Lord, from Thee !

The tiniest insects on the wall
 Thy purpose know, Thy laws obey ;
 Is man the crowning work of all,
 Less worthy Thee, less worth than they ?

'Twas said Thy finished work was good,
 What else could come from perfect hand ?
 Then, is this sin-sick interlude,
 Defiance, Lord, of Thy command !

Toil bears no curse, those orbs that shine,
 Roll ceaseless through their ether sea ;
 Are they less perfect, less divine
 Than when they issued, Lord, from Thee !

We climb from low to high estate,
 Aspiring upward, day by day ;
 When worthy, we shall find the gate,
 And walk with God the perfect way.

CALVARY.

Gloomy clouds o'er Calvary creep,
Kindly veils to shade His woe ;
As the figures crowd the steep,
Waiting for the final throe—
Crowned with thorns, instead of bays ;
Torn with dreadful agony ;
Need we wonder that he says :
“ Why hast Thou forsaken me ?”

Where are those that woo'd His smile,
Ate the bread, and drank the wine ;
Some deny him, some revile—
Watch from far his life decline ;
Yet for such the Christ would die,
Drink that cup of agony—
Suffer pangs which forced that cry :
“ Why hast Thou forsaken me ?”

Who would blame a moment's doubt,
When the iron hand appears ?
While insatiate demons shout,
Nail or thorn the soft flesh tears.

Listen ! while the Master bleeds,
 While Night shrouds the land and sea —
 Oh, “ My God, my God ! ” he pleads :
 “ Why hast Thou forsaken me ? ”

God shall judge those fellow-men,
 Those who left their Lord to die ;
 He, who watches now as then
 With an all observant eye.
 Unto us who read the page,
 Vivid, as in years gone by ;
 O'er the tumult and the rage
 Sharply rings that piercing cry !

Jesus ! was Thy life in vain ?
 Must each heart repeat Thy cry ?
 Bear Thy cross, and writhe in pain,
 Like Thee, fight for truth and die.
 Father, though Thy chastening rod
 Smites for good we fail to see ;
 In Thy dwelling place O God !
 We shall not forsaken be.



"IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE"

"In My Father's house!"
 This wondrous world of ours—
 Hills, vales, and seas, and streams—
 And birds, and trees, and flowers;
 And boundless, bearing plains—
 Rich dawns and sunset gleams.

"In My Father's house!"
 When o'er our fading eyes
 Death spreads its darkening pall;
 Shall what is godlike rise?
 And, in some realm more fair,
 Find Love is all in all!

"In My Father's house!"
 This present Here, and There.
 Why live a prey to fears?
 When God is everywhere:
 His cars, the circling suns—
 His course, round all the spheres

"In My Father's house !"
 A house not made with hands,
 Not bound with iron bars—
 Nor fenced with morticed bands ;
 A measureless domain,
 Crowded with brilliant stars.

"In My Father's house !"
 No spacious tower, or hall—
 No mountain city, crowned
 With stone or jasper wall—
 No gated keep, with guard,
 Pacing the terrace round.

"In My Father's house !"
 Though systems all grow old :
 Though suns exhaust their light,
 Turn lustreless and cold ;
 Our souls, O God, in search of Thee,
 Shall not be lost in night.

"In My Father's house !"
 Lie still, poor throbbing heart,
 Though all around shall fade,
 With God thou shalt have part—
 Somewhere, for His immortals,
 A home of love is made.

"ACROSS THE WAY."

Time is short, and many precious moments
 From early morning, till life's closing day,
 Are spent in wonderment and formless guesses
 On that which waits us—just across the way.

Life is short, yet, weird and ghostly fancies
 Lay siege, and conquering, hold us as their prey—
 Shall we then look beyond, or through these shadows,
 When in the clearer light, across the way?

Life is so short, there is no time to ripen
 Our various projects; push them as we may—
 Shall we mature them in that endless future
 Which opens for us, when we cross the way?

Must knowledge die when these brown clods close o'er us;
 When books have perished, where shall wisdom stay—
 Shall it take root, evolve in other planets?
 Or float along with us, across the way?

Shall all be stillness when this noisy organ
 With its warm, crimson valve is common clay ?
 Shall signs be eloquent as language spoken ;
 And who will teach those signs, across the way ?

Our modes are cumbrous ; we are long of learning,
 Though Wisdom woo's us by its lustrous ray ;
 Shall we search deeper in the mines of Knowledge,
 When in the brighter fields, across the way ?

Who, who shall guide us to that other country ?
 Who hath discerned its shore, beyond the gray ;
 Shall intuition lead us to its border,
 And, shall it only seem, across the way ?

Shall there be peace ; or strife on terms unequal ?
 Tens in command, whom thousands must obey ;
 Masters in ermine, slaves in coarsest raiment
 Fighting a hunger-fiend, across the way ?

Thou see'st Father, how the mass is driven !
 Interests, and factions at distracting play ;
 Hasten a change, now, in this living present—
 Before that greater change, across the way !

No more let cunning triumph over weakness—
 Despair take deeper root, vice lure astray ;
 All happy here, shall make the future sweeter,
 When Thou shalt lead us, Lord ! Across the Way.

OUR ONLY PLEA!

In Thy Temple, Lord of all !
Humbly at Thy feet we fall,
Seeking light, Thy will to know ;
Strength, to vanquish want and woe ;
Wisdom as the years increase,
Zeal, which shall not cool nor cease—
Wild and wayward though we be,
We would come, O God, to Thee !

Not as came the hordes of old,
Stained with blood to seek Thy fold ;
Not with incense in the air ,
Crucifix, or formal prayer ;
Robes of Sacerdotal Caste ;
Gorgeous feast, or Graceless fast—
We would come with this one plea,
Child-like Love, and Trust in Thee !

We have curbed those vain desires
 Quenched the sacrificial fires ;
 Purged our land of many stains ;
 Brutal combats, racking pains ;
 Torturing engines, burning piles,
 Wizards' charms, and Witches' wiles --
 And would come, O God, to Thee !
 Love and Trust, our only plea !

Thirsting not for realms more fair,
 Wings to cleave their purer air ;
 Robes of gold or spotless white ;
 Shadeless day, or cloudless night—
 If perfection we must share,
 For that change our hearts prepare—
 As we are, our only plea,
 Is our loving trust in Thee !

Here, or There, below, above,
 Rest we on our Father's love ;
 There, as here, the flowery turf,
 Murmuring stream or breaking surf ;
 Song of bird, or voice of cheer,
 Shall declare His presence near—
 All hearts joining in the plea,
 Love and Trust, O God, in Thee !

AT FORTY YEARS.

"I wonder what it will be like at Forty."—Byron.

Forty Years on life's broad river,
 Forty years of storm and calm ;
 Forty years of sweat and shiver,
 Forty years of gall and balm.

How the chords of memory lingers
 On the sweeping changes seen ;
 Touches, light as baby fingers
 Take us back to— might have been.

Back, through manhood's growing stages,
 Back to childhood's pictured lore ;
 Back to cone the scholar's pages,
 Scan the meagre fruits they bore.

School-time, short-lived, unheroic,
 Scant of charm or daring deed ;
 Yet, the spirit of the Stoic
 Has not crept into my creed.

How the fire of boyhood's passion
 Kindled at the sight of wrong ;
 How it scorned the tyrant fashion
 In its yearnings to be strong.

Strong, to smite the evil-doer,
 Strong to shield the weaker one ;
 Strong to help in something truer ;
 Strong to see real justice done.

Oh, those hopes so rudely shattered !
 Blown, or burst, or trampled down ;
 Each fond Idol dust-bespattered,
 With a fool's cap for a crown.

Oh! that vague and idle dreaming,
 Baseless as mock suns or stars;
 Formless as the ether streaming
 From the disc of lurid Mars.

I have lit no torch of glory,
 Kindled no bright steady flame ;
 Life, the old, old common story,
 Going naked as it came.

What about the talents lent me,
 Have I hid them in the dust ?
 Have I shirked the mission sent me,
 Has it proved a miss-placed trust ?

If so, master now that langour,
 And go forth with firmer tread.
 Yet appease God's righteous anger !
 Raise for good a chastened head.

Let the past be dead for ever,
 Like regret, beyond re-call ;
 Balmy airs from heaven can never
 Sweeten fruits that blight and fall.

Thresh my sheaves—they are not many—
 Far from worthy of their cost ,
 Yet, if Bread is found in any,
 All my labour is not lost.

If I shed a beam of gladness
 Into one lone sinking heart ;
 Light its darkness, lift its sadness,
 I have faithful been, in part.

Only finite powers are given,
 'Tis not meet that we should know
 All the deepest things of heaven,
 All the fruits of what we sow.

We are not, not even in seeming
 To our poor devices left ;
 Light from God all round is streaming,
 For us yet, the rocks are cleft.

Manhood has the God-like in it,
 All its leanings are not vile ;
 Those who choose the good, shall win it,
 With the "Well done," and the Smile.

Up, in manhood's strength of being !
 Girt with boyhood's hope and cheer ;
 Heaven within our range of seeing—
 O'er the world-wide waters steer.

Leave off planning, and pursuing
 Chimeras, which can't be won !
 Work is blessed in the doing,
 Blessed with reward when done.

Youth, we cannot now live over ;
 Childhood's years come not again ;
 Nor the role of sighing lover,
 With perplexing bliss and pain.

All past joys are over-rated,
 Present, and to come denied ;
 Life is blest when truly mated ;
 Heaven on earth if true when tried.

Homes bind up life's broken story
 Homes, with Love enthroned serene ;
 Wife-hood in her robes of glory
 Sheds o'er all a hallowed sheen.



YOU

When You and I my friend, were young,
Our pathways lay together :
Now, you have drifted into calm,
I still breast stormy weather.

We for an hour converge again
Within the range of speaking,
When thoughts of joy so crowd the brain,
I can't find what I'm seeking.

I was no slave to pomp or pride,
Nor in my manner craven ;
I've fought all through, yet failed to gain
Like you, a peaceful haven.

You have thus early found your goal,
And are at anchor lying ;
While, like a lone, lost mariner,
Distress's flag I'm flying

There seems no rest for wayward hearts,
Till Death's white robes are wrapping ;
Or robeless clay is washed ashore,
And waves against it lapping.

Had you but chanced the way I went,
And I your path had taken—

Glasgow, Nov. 1889.

AND I.

How different might it all have been
When from life's dream we waken.

You might, with ease have crossed the fords,
Where I careered or stumbled ;
And lightly climbed the steepest banks,
Where I sat down and grumbled.

You might have leapt the rocky bars,
When I sought longer turnings,
And come unscathed through snares or wrongs,
With half of my heart-burnings.

I passed by fortune seeking fame,
You found both waiting, smiling ;
You toiled for comforts, I went on,
With songs the way beguiling.

Oft through the fire, and through the cloud ;
Above the blasts appalling ;
Your face appeared, your friendly voice
In fancy, I heard calling.

This glad re-union is so short,
Forgive my rude caressing ;
And if they are not wasted words,
Accept the warbler's blessing.

ALEX. M'LAREN.

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